

The Life of a Bönpo Luminary:
Sainthood, Partisanship and Literary Representation in a 20th Century Tibetan Biography

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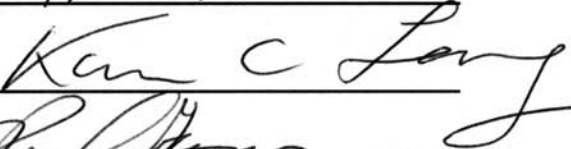

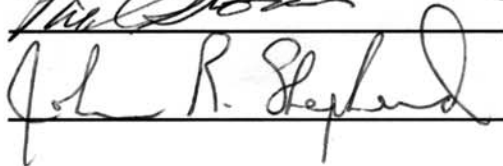
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ABSTRACT

This project examines how Tibetan literature reflects and shapes images of sanctity within the cultural dynamics of religious partisanship in twentieth century Bön religion. Bön is a vital minority tradition rooted in indigenous Tibetan culture yet profoundly influenced by dialogue with Buddhist lineages, and the period in question marks the culmination of a highly influential period of religious ecumenicism. The dissertation explores a distinctive instance of religious life-writing within this milieu by focusing on the life-story of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen, who stands as not only the most prominent and influential figure in the Tibetan Bön religion in the twentieth century, but also at the center of a controversy within his own lineage. While his supporters revered him as an enlightened teacher whose non-sectarian sensibilities were perfectly suited to the times, his critics accused of him of championing an unorthodox movement that transgressed sectarian boundaries and mixed Bön with Buddhism. My dissertation explores the social and religious grounds for these contrasting perspectives as well as a disciple's literary attempt to reconcile them.

To that end, this project offers a detailed study of Shardza's religious biographies or *namtar* (*rnam thar*), composed in two versions by his disciple, Kelzang Tenpé Gyaltsen. Culminating in a translation and critical edition of a previously unavailable work, this study considers how a Tibetan author, writing for a diverse and potentially divided audience, has utilized both a saintly typology and an historiographical chronology to render an image of the remarkable life and career of his teacher. Weaving together textual research, oral interviews and translation, this work explores the nature of this disciple's hagiographical portrait, revealing it as a composite sketch embodying religious ideals representing different segments of the author's imagined audience. In the process, it considers important distinguishing features of Bön 'orthodoxy' and 'heterodoxy' as well

as the way in which tradition and religious authority are represented within a rich local environment.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION

Encountering a Bönpo Luminary

Perched along the pilgrim's trail encircling the sacred mountain of Jadur (*bya dur*) in southern Amdo (*a mdo*), the small hermitage of Drak Yungdrung Kha (*brag g.yung drung kha*) looks down upon a winding road, fertile fields, and the buildings belonging to the 'old' and 'new' Gamé (*dga' mal*) monasteries. Known locally as a long-standing site for serious practitioners of the Bön religion, the hermitage stands a few hours distance by foot from the valley floor. Typical of many mountain retreats that punctuate the landscape of eastern Tibet, the hermitage mostly consists of a small number of individual living quarters. Since the early 1980s, when official constraints were relaxed on religious practice, Drak Yungdrung Kha has been managed by a local lama known as Aku Shöyang (*a khu phyug g.yang*), who oversees the contemplative training of a small but dedicated group of resident nuns.¹

In the summer of 1996, a visitor appeared at the door of my drab, cement-walled hotel room in a nearby frontier town, brimming with excitement. He was the former spouse of an anthropologist conducting fieldwork in the region, a short-term visitor who was holding a Tibetan text in his hands. He told me that he had just returned from an extraordinary meeting with Aku Shöyang.

My guest was neither a researcher nor a practitioner of Bön or Buddhism, and he spoke neither Tibetan nor Chinese. Nonetheless, he had been motivated to undertake the moderately strenuous, uphill hike to meet this local lama. Though the two men were

¹ For further material on this hermitage and the religious life of Aku Shöyang (alias Aku Xuiwang) and his disciples, cf. J.F. Marc Desjardins 1993.

unable to communicate through language, my visitor felt they had enjoyed a measure of unspoken understanding. As a result, the lama formally presented his visitor with the gift of a text, inaccessible but laden with meaning. From the point of view of my guest, it had been conveyed with the sentiment, "everything you want to know is in here." But what was it this modern Bönpo hermit had chosen to epitomize his tradition on this auspicious occasion, and who was its author? That was now the question laid before me in the form of a Tibetan manuscript.

Intrigued by the mystery, I discovered in the days that followed that the text was a comprehensive, rather advanced guidebook to Bön practice. It was entitled *The Self-Dawning of the Three Bodies* (*sku gsum rang shar*) and it covered a systematic array of subjects related to Dzokchen (*rdzogs chen*) or 'Great Perfection' meditation in concise, instructional chapters.² This particular text was intended for those who had completed a series of preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*), and it comprised the fundamentals (*dnegos gzhi*) of Dzokchen contemplation. I also discovered, to my surprise, that the author of this impressive compilation was already familiar to me.

This is because the text's author, Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (*shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan*, 1859-1934), ranks as the best-known, most influential and arguably the most highly-regarded member of the Bön lineage to have lived in modern times. It is his life, as remembered and recounted by a close disciple, that will serve as the primary subject matter for this dissertation. Despite his general renown, very little scholarship has thus far

² Dzokchen refers to the apex of a nine-fold religious system of doctrine and practice shared by both the Bönpos and the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. A distinctly Tibetan tradition, it was especially well-known for its literary appeals to the immanence of liberating insight, its poetic language of naturalness and spontaneity, and its meditations integrating specific visionary experiences with a profound recognition of one's own innate awareness.

sought to focus sustained attention on Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen's life or his vital place in Bön tradition. The present study begins to address this lacuna by exploring how a particular literary image of this famous Bön luminary has been fashioned by his followers and depicted in writing.

Centering on an analysis of two Tibetan religious biographies (*rnam thar*)—both authored by Shardza's disciple, Kelzang Tenpé Gyaltsen (*bskal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*)—this dissertation reflects upon the distinctive way in which ideological, literary, and historiographical concerns intersect within the framework of Shardza's traditional life-story. Aiming to contribute to a growing body of research on Tibetan hagiographical literature, this study considers how particular religious ideals and models of sanctity are expressed, reinforced, and reshaped within the localized context of twentieth century Bön religion—and to what ends.

Primarily and explicitly written to foster faith in readers, these two examples of traditional religious narrative conform to important literary conventions and rehearse familiar hagiographical tropes, echoing prominent themes in Tibetan and Buddhist biographies. Yet they do much more than recreate a generic image of an all-purpose Tibetan saint. A close reading of the two texts reveals that the biographical images they create emerged from within a charged intra-sectarian context—one that actively shapes the religious ideals on display. Drawing in part on compelling oral history, I contend that the model of sanctity provided by the life-story of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen directly reflects and responds to two distinct audiences comprising the texts' twentieth century Tibetan readership: one liberal and the other conservative. While aiming to appeal to both segments of his imagined audience, the resulting portrait reveals its author's special effort to defuse sharp criticism Shardza had attracted from conservative members of his own

lineage and, ultimately, to define a religious ideal with the potential to unify a fractured Bön community.

A Bönpo Icon in Scholarship and Contemporary Culture

My initial recognition of Shardza's name and my general awareness of his prominence among the Bönpo owed both to Western academic sources as well as to contemporary Bön religious authorities; in both communities, he has become a true icon for his lineage. In fact, any number of discrete philosophical, historical or ethnographic studies addressing his substantial contributions to Bön would be worthwhile and should be encouraged. I must confess that the investigation as conceived here yields but provisional results with respect to Shardza's 'actual' status vis-à-vis the Bön lineage. However, by taking seriously and opening up the literary works depicting his life, I aim to offer one piece of an engaging puzzle that, through the efforts of many, I hope may eventually be brought to completion.

Generally speaking, Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen has come to be best known for: 1) the authorship of at least thirteen volumes of texts on a panoply of subjects, including Dzokchen doctrinal works and a traditional Bön history; 2) a pluralistic, non-sectarian attitude in response to the religious diversity of eastern Tibet; and 3) a dedication to advanced contemplative practice, publicly illustrated through a saintly death. And as I was beginning to realize during my 1996 visit, his contributions also stand at the forefront of Bön religious revival in contemporary Tibet and beyond.

Among scholarly circles—both *emic* and *etic*—Shardza's renown owes in large part to an extensive textual legacy, the vast majority of which continues to await in-depth

academic study.³ During his lifetime, Shardza's body of publications totaled thirteen xylographic volumes—though the most recent typeset editions of his collected works comprise a full eighteen. Headed by a set of compositions he conceived as “Five Treasuries” (*mdzod nga*), these scholarly tomes represented a diverse collection of titles on vital topics including Dzokchen theory and practice; scriptural tenet systems; soteriology; history; and Tantric initiation.⁴ These publications are augmented by additional works such as a popular introductory practice text, *The Ocean of Oral Precepts and Scripture*, or *Kalung Gyatso*, (*bka' lung rgya mtsho*), which has served as an accessible gateway to the 'preliminaries' (*sngon 'gro*) traditionally undertaken by both monks and laity. His collected works also contains influential guidebooks on Dzokchen meditation such as *The Self-Dawning of the Three Bodies*, or *Kusum Rangshar* (*sku gsum rang shar*), which is highly valued in present-day Tibet by Bön contemplatives like Aku Shöyang.⁵

Because of his written contributions, Shardza began to receive some acknowledgment from western-trained scholars of Bön almost as soon as sustained contact with representatives of the tradition and its texts became possible in the 1960s. In their 1968 discussion of twentieth century Tibetan cultural history, David Snellgrove and Hugh

³ One notable and valued contribution to exploring this uncharted terrain is Samten Karmay's 1972 publication, *The Treasury of Good Sayings: a Tibetan History of Bön*, a book-length study introducing and rendering into English significant portions of a traditional Bön religious history Shardza authored in 1921. Karmay's important contribution brought Shardza's traditional Bön voice into conversation for the first time with *etic* scholarship on Bön history.

⁴ The treasuries addressing these topics consist of, respectively, the *dbying rig mdzod*, *lung rig mdzod*, *sde snod mdzod*, *legs bshad mdzod*, and *nam mkha' mdzod*. For an overview of the Tibetan contents of Shardza's collected works (*gsung 'bum*), cf. Desjarlais 1993, Appendix, pp. 91-98.

⁵ In fact, Desjarlais reports that Aku Shöyang (Aku Xiuwang), alias Wanggyal Drakpa (*dbang rgyal grags pa*) or Tsultrim Namdak (*tshul khrims rnam dag*) was a successor to a certain Ngawang Namgyal (*ngag dbang rnam rgyal*) and Yungdrung Nyima Gyaltzen (*g.yung drung nyi ma rgyal mtshan*), “both disciples in the transmission lineage of Shardza Rimpoche.” Elsewhere he adds that “the system of Atri (*a khrid*) [Dzokchen meditation] that is currently taught by Aku Xiuwang relies greatly on the work of Shardza Rimpoche. (Desjarlais 1993, pp. 61, 67).”

Richardson identify Shardza as a leading figure, reporting that "among Bönpos... there was Tashi Gyaltzen of Kham, who produced fifteen volumes of works, including a history of Bön. He lived the life of a hermit, and when he died some forty years ago, he is supposed to have disappeared leaving no mortal remains behind."⁶ In 1970, the estimable E. Gene Smith observed that Shardza's major works utilize the organizational rubric of the 'treasury' (*mdzod*), which previously had been made famous by exceptional Buddhist authors such as the fourteenth century Longchenpa (*klong chen pa*, 1308-1364) and the nineteenth century systematizer Jamgön Kongtrul (*'jam mgon kong sprul*, 1813-1899).⁷ Based in part on this evidence of intertextuality, Smith includes Shardza "among the great figures of the Eclectic Movement," a fruitful period of inter-sectarian collaboration in eastern Tibet in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In fact, Smith goes so far as to compare Shardza to the most prominent and prolific Buddhist masters spearheading these developments, describing Shardza as "a scholastic...[who] is for the Bönpo what Kongtrul and Khyentsé (*mkhyen brtse [dbang po]*, 1820-1892) were for the Buddhists."⁸ Such high praise for Shardza from a noted authority undoubtedly elevated Shardza's reputation in Western scholarship, so that nowadays one invariably finds Shardza singled out for mention in any discussion of Bön contributions to the *rimé* (*ris med*) or non-sectarian movement. As a result, Shardza represents one of only a handful of Bönpo from any time period to have achieved name recognition among Tibetologists not specializing in the Bön religion. Yet despite the fact that Shardza has achieved a certain degree of prominence in Tibetan Studies for

⁶ Snellgrove and Richardson 1995 (1968), p. 246.

⁷ Smith 1970, p. 14, n.29,30; p. 36, n.67.

⁸ Smith 1970, p. 35 and p. 36, n. 67.

epitomizing a liberal Bönpo orientation to sectarian affairs in eastern Tibet during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—a perspective admittedly shared by many Bönpos—such a view does not represent an entirely value-free assessment of his position. Although controversy no longer seems to swirl around this issue in the present day, prior to the cultural upheaval of the past half-century a progressive image of Shardza was not unequivocally hailed in the Bönpo world. As this study will show, certain characterizations made by critics within the Bön community—emphasizing Shardza’s liberal inclinations—required Shardza’s supporters to assert and continually reaffirm his orthodox status.

These issues notwithstanding, Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen is widely esteemed among Bönpo communities today. On a popular level, he is perhaps most notably revered for his dedication to contemplation and the resulting signs of spiritual mastery he reportedly displayed at the time of his death. While his virtuoso status as a contemplative owes to a long-standing commitment to a retreat lifestyle, this found dramatic expression in his final attainment of the highest religious achievement possible in the Dzokchen system, the so-called 'rainbow body' or 'body of light' (*'ja' lus*). According to tradition, in such cases the dying process culminates in the intentional dissolution of the physical body into its subtle 'elements,' yielding uncanny appearances of multi-colored light as well as the absence of an ordinary corpse. Needless to say, the implications of such an extraordinary (and extraordinarily public) death were not only soteriological but also sociological, effectively cementing Shardza’s place in the popular imagination, fostering his legacy as a genuinely accomplished lama, and lending added credibility to his written works.

And as aptly indicated by Aku Shöyang's symbolic gesture, Shardza and his works continue to be revered and utilized in present-day Tibet, rendering further work on his

life and works especially urgent for our understanding of contemporary religious activity among Bönpo in the PRC. Based on fieldwork conducted from 1991-93 in the Bönpo communities of southern Amdo, J.F. Marc Desjardins determined that “most of the masters in post-revolution’s Sichuan were students of Shardza Rinpoche’s disciples. His works are now common among the young monks of Songpan and the Bönpos of the Kham area (West Sichuan).”⁹ Tshering Thar observed in 2002 that reprints of Shardza’s published works produced during the 1980s “can be found in almost all the Bönpo monasteries in Tibet,” further adding that his writings and “even statues of him appear in Buddhist monasteries in Kham.”¹⁰ As of 1993, Shardza’s small hermitage had been selected by the authorities of Degé (*sde dge*) County as the seat of an official training school for Bönpo monks under their jurisdiction, and by 1997 a new printing house and a number of new cells had been constructed, with fourteen practitioners in residence.¹¹ In addition, the remarkable manner of his death has imbued his former hermitage with a felt sense of blessing and power, so that “people have been going there not only for practice, but for pilgrimage.”¹²

In recent years, Shardza’s popularity has extended itself to surprising new audiences well beyond the borders of cultural Tibet. Through the work of leading Bönpo authorities in exile over the past fifteen years, Shardza’s practical meditation guides and his inspirational example have become a key Bönpo component of the ongoing export and global assimilation of Tibetan religion—another potentially valuable site for reflection.

⁹ Desjardins 1993, p. 21.

¹⁰ Thar 2002, p. 160, 162. By way of example, Thar mentions Galang Teng (*dga’ lang steng*) in Degé and Kham Dogar (*kham mdo sgar*) in Gojo (*go ’jo*) as two Buddhist monasteries with such images.

¹¹ Thar 2002, p. 168.

¹² Thar 2002, p. 165-166. See note 3 for more on Shardza’s miraculous passing.

For example, in Europe in 1991, the venerable Tenzin Namdak, the former Head Teacher (*slob dpon*) of Menri Monastery, provided oral teachings in English on Shardza's *Kusum Rangshar*, transcriptions of which were edited and made available by the independent scholar John Myrdhin Reynolds.¹³ In 1993, Tenzin Namdak authorized the widespread publication of *The Heart Drops of Dharmakaya*, his commentary on another of Shardza's Dzokchen meditation guides, the *Kunzang Nyingtik* (*kun bzang snying thig*). Here he also introduced Shardza's life-story to an English-speaking audience through a twelve-page synopsis extracted from the shorter of two biographical accounts, *The Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees*, which is translated in full here in Part II. This important inclusion not only replicated a traditional intertextual dynamic—in contemporary Tibet Shardza's full-length biography is published together with his collected works—but also functioned traditionally by instilling faith in Shardza's example among a new class of practitioner.¹⁴ Tenzin Wangyal, a Bönpo *geshé* who founded and directs the Ligmincha Institute for the study and practice of Bön in the West, also cites Shardza's writings and his life-example as an inspiration and continues to lead retreat programs for Western students based upon practices Shardza lays out in his guidebooks.¹⁵

¹³ Reynolds 1992.

¹⁴ It is interesting to note how the preface to the book seems to take its audience into account—a large segment of which could be assumed to be relatively new to the minority Bön tradition yet would have knowledge of and possible affiliation with Tibetan Buddhist lineages. Thus Shardza is described as "a famous Bonpo master who gave teachings to students of other schools of Tibetan Buddhism as well as to many students from the Bon community," a depiction that strongly underscores his broad-mindedly non-sectarian orientations and his apparent authority in broader religious circles (Namdak 1993, p. 7).

¹⁵ In a recent popular book, Tenzin Wangyal relates that "I have always been impressed with the story of Shardza Rinpoche, a great Tibetan master, who, when he died in 1934, attained the body of light (*'ja' lus*), a sign of full realization. During his life he had so many accomplished students, wrote many important texts, and worked for the benefit of the country in which he lived. It's difficult to imagine how he could have been so productive in his external life, fulfilling the many responsibilities and long projects he undertook for the benefit of others, and still have been able to accomplish such attainment through spiritual practice (Wangyal 1998, p. 14)." In July 2006, the Ligmincha Institute will host a retreat led by Tenzin Wangyal centering on the Tummo (*gtun mo*) section of Shardza's *Kusum Rangshar*.

Envisioning Shardza: A Biographical Overview

As the preceding sketch of Shardza's pervasive influence has been intended to show, the full extent of his contributions and his status warrants serious scholarly attention, and from a number of different vantage points. As a preliminary step in this process, the present study focuses on the literary texts that explicitly claim to inform us about Shardza's life. In this regard I am following a growing trend in Tibetan Studies, one that values traditional narrative accounts for what they potentially reveal about localized religious expressions and particular relationships between authors, their subjects, and their intended audiences. Attending carefully to the nuances of these texts, I seek to explore the distinctive character of Bön during this important period in a vibrant part of the Tibetan cultural world—as revealed through the lens of a disciple's narrative historiography—and thereby to shed light upon the important milieu in which Shardza and his disciple-biographer lived as well as the cultural dynamics operative within the texts' construction. Let us first begin this process, however, with a brief, thumbnail sketch of our subject: Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen.

According to the biographical sources, Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen was born in 1859 to an unheralded Bönpo family of modest means in the rural area of Kham (*kham*) known as Dzakhog (*rdza khog*). Despite the initial objections of his parents, he formally entered the religious life as a novice monk at the age of nine. Having reportedly discerned strong religious predispositions in the young boy, Shardza's first teacher and 'root lama,' Ratrul Tenzin Wangyal (*dpra sprul bstan 'dzin dbyang rgyal*), successfully convinced Shardza's reluctant parents to commit their only son (and potential heir) to the local monastery of Tengchen (*steng chen*). It was here that the young Shardza would gradually acquire his primary religious training.

During his time at Tengchen, Shardza's religious life centered on performing ritual services in the protector temple, assisting his teacher in fulfilling the requests of local patrons, and beginning a process of self-study that involved reading and reflecting on scriptures. Shardza reportedly revered his teacher as far more than a provincial lama—recounting deeply transformative transmissions of Tantric realization that ensued from their relationship. However, the young Shardza eventually grew dissatisfied with routine monastic affairs, longing instead to follow the example of important visiting figures he met in his youth—many of whom were liberal treasure-revealers—who advocated a retreat-based lifestyle.

After undertaking a formative period of pilgrimage in his mid-twenties, he returned to his home region and began teaching on a limited basis, and by the age of thirty-four he had garnered enough support to establish his own small hermitage on a remote mountainside. Devoting significant time to advanced Dzokchen contemplation, he began attracting like-minded students who took up residence nearby. Amidst this environment he commenced the practice of writing, with many of his compositions owing directly to his esoteric experiences and visionary encounters.

By this point in his life, Shardza had also assumed full monastic ordination and appears to have been uncommonly fastidious in adhering to the discipline, eschewing the eating of meat or the use of animal skins, among other self-imposed restrictions. It is worth noting that the ideal as presented here thus seems to encompass, and to attempt to harmonize, several potentially competing orientations to the religious life. This is because for Bönpo communities in nineteenth and twentieth century Tibet, the available socio-religious alternatives typically would have involved choices between the unconventional power of an esoteric path and the moral purity of the monastic lifestyle; conflicting levels

of commitment to contemplative training as opposed to academic study and scholarly exegesis; and widely differing attitudes towards revelatory innovation and scriptural conservation. In Shardza's case, he emerges as something of an ideal moderate, who proves capable of embodying the proverbial Middle Way.

In the years that followed, from approximately his early forties to his mid-sixties, Shardza traveled and taught widely in eastern Tibet, gradually making a name for himself while circulating and teaching from his written works. While he is portrayed as generally maintaining the modest demeanor of a hermit throughout his adulthood, ultimately his reputation as an effective interpreter of Bön texts, an experienced contemplative, and a well-qualified lama earned him acclaim from several quarters. The vaunted position he came to enjoy left him well-poised to engage in productive dialogue with a diverse array of religious personages (including non-sectarian Buddhists), and to successfully raise funds throughout eastern Tibet for the restoration of his home monastery of Tengchen, as well as for the construction of a new practice center in Dzakhog. By his early sixties, his textual corpus and regional renown had attracted the attention of leading Bönpos throughout the Tibetan cultural world, stretching from as far away as Dolpo in western Nepal to Aba prefecture in contemporary Qinghai province. The last several years of his life were spent back in his small hermitage, where he offered personal instruction to close disciples, presided over ritual performances, gave annual teachings to sizable audiences, and received visitors. Upon his death in 1934 at the age of seventy-five—highlighted by his inspiring demonstration of Dzokchen self-mastery—he was succeeded by numerous disciples, led by his nephew and chosen successor, Lodrö Gyatso (*blo gros rgya mtsho*).

While the biographies themselves provide scant information on the subsequent transmission of his texts and teachings, preliminary inquiries and available ethnographic

reports make clear that a number of prominent individuals successfully inherited and propagated Shardza's systems of teaching and practice. While additional research remains to be carried out among Bönpos today, there is no doubt that Shardza's practice traditions as well as his written works have survived the tumult of cultural devastation and repression over the past several decades in modern China, forming an essential element of current Bön revival and international expansion.

Outline of the Study: Assessing and Representing a Saintly Portrait

While contemporary attitudes among Bönpo toward Shardza are overwhelmingly positive, further research reveals a more complex history. Our initial focus will center on a number of seminal factors that crucially influenced the world of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen and his biographer, beginning with the climate created in eastern Tibet by the non-partisan *rimé* movement. While relations with many Buddhists proved especially collegial during this period, the climate was made more complex for Bönpos by a certain amount of underlying friction that characterized intra-sectarian relations between Bönpo institutions in eastern and central Tibet. These internal dynamics, in fact, set the stage for the single most potent and immediate issue to shape the biographies of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen: an open rift that developed within Bönpo communities on the question of whether or not Shardza was sufficiently orthodox. Despite Shardza's great renown—or perhaps because of it—a controversy erupted in the later stages of his life that culminated in a series of letters circulated between Bönpo supporters and detractors over a number of years. Chapter One will present some revealing oral history on these events and explore the relevant categories of 'Old' and 'New' Bön, loaded terms with important ramifications for Shardza and his depiction.

Chapter Two focuses attention on the literary dimension of Shardza's life-story, moving from essential issues of context to ask questions about specific qualities of the texts themselves. As an example of *namtar* (*rnam thar*) or what some have called Tibetan hagiography—literally stories of 'full liberation'—these works represent a significant and broad genre, one with roots in Indian literature and possible analogues in the saintly renderings of other traditions. As suggested above, the importance of these inspirational writings may be gleaned from Tenzin Namdak's decision to include an overview of Shardza's life in *The Heart Drops of Dharmakaya*, thereby recreating for a new audience a vital religious dynamic that reflects traditional Tibetan usage of religious biography—one that has also been reported for Shardza's life-story in Tibet.¹⁶ As Janet Gyatso has observed, stories of exemplary lives help to engender confidence among students and successors in the authenticity of their lineage and the efficacy of its practices, and they may also serve as an exhortation to engage the practices as well as an aid in helping students assess their own experiences.¹⁷

In the present case, one finds that a principle disciple of Shardza has sought to establish his teacher's religious significance with recourse to many of the hallmarks of hagiographical writing. This chapter will introduce the author and assess what is known of his background as well as examine his explicit statements on the genre as a whole and the specific nature of his own project. It will also consider how he fashions a portrait of sanctity within this literary framework while simultaneously countering the unspoken

¹⁶ For instance, a friend at the Bönpo monastery of Menri in Dolanji, India, Dungri Shedrup Gyaltsen, reminisced about his experience as a teenager in the Sharkhog region of southern Amdo, quite close to Drak Yungdrung Kha, where he undertook the traditional three-year retreat. While utilizing Shardza's texts for instruction, the small group of retreatants with whom he was practicing read Shardza's life-story together with their teacher, developing a faith in Shardza that was still evident.

¹⁷ Gyatso 1998, p. 8-11.

claims of Shardza's critics—all the while aiming to appeal to as wide an audience as possible.

Drawing upon organizing themes established in *The Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees*, Chapter Three will begin by presenting the literary treatment of Shardza's previous lives as well as his birth, childhood, and entry into the religious life. It is fair to say that the biographical portrait we have of Shardza does not seem especially distinctive when considered against the backdrop of Tibetan life writing, which includes hundreds of formalized accounts of Tibetan religious careers following a similar pattern. Yet these complex documents also yield a tremendous amount of texture and richness when examined closely. This chapter, then, seeks to capture some of the character and subtlety that emerges in the recounting of Shardza's early religious career, centering on his relationship to his primary teacher and the nature of his early training; his initial esoteric experiences and intellectual pursuits; and his assumption of religious precepts. In the process, one observes how Dzokchen metaphysical assumptions, saintly tropes and local history intertwine to provide the foundations for a particular construction of an ideal religious life.

Chapter Four turns its attention to the formative phase of Shardza's youth, exploring how the biographies present the emergent inclinations and religious orientations that shape his temperament. These were determined in large part by a breadth of religious teachers, by the style of training he adopted, and by the important early pilgrimage he undertook that brought him into contact with a broader socio-cultural world. These lasting and varied influences provided an important basis for alternative representations to emerge, so that ultimately Shardza may be fashioned by his biographer as an open-minded but well-informed polymath who transcends and reconciles typically contrasting

religious types, becoming both a great adept and a prolific scholar, a non-sectarian visionary and a committed Bönpo monastic.

As we move into Shardza's young adulthood and his exploration of that larger world, one begins to see clearly how, in functioning as traditional historiographies, these sources demonstrate concern not only for piety, but also for credibility and attention to detail. As Kurtis Schaeffer has recently argued, Tibetan biographies serve as rich sources containing not only instantiations of religious ideals but also a host of "esoteric philosophy, folk practices, local history, social history, political rhetoric, and pyrotechnic miracle displays in addition to personal and emotional musings."¹⁸ Indeed, exploring Shardza's biographies yields invaluable, otherwise inaccessible perspectives on the margins of Tibetan culture. In Chapter Five, I examine the reported features of the religious career of this minority Bönpo living amidst the borderlands of eastern Tibet—writing, meditating, traveling and traversing sectarian boundaries—which promise to yield new insights into this vital period of Tibetan religious and cultural history.

Here we find, for example, that despite Shardza's early monastic affiliations, as well as his apparent emphasis on the precepts, he spent the majority of his career not within the framework of an institutionally-based monastic life, but rather in a small hermitage. Throughout his adult life he interspersed periods of retreat, which included writing and teaching as well as meditation, with periods of travel among various communities in the eastern border areas. During these journeys he typically presided over rituals, offered and occasionally received teachings and initiations, attracted students and patrons, and raised funds for religious purposes. He also shared spiritual experiences and engaged in in-depth

¹⁸ Schaeffer 2004, p. 6.

conversations with other respected teachers he encountered, including leading Buddhist figures, which has contributed to his reputation for a non-sectarian outlook marked by constructive relationships to Buddhists and their literature.

Chapter Six considers how the biographies treat key elements of Shardza's enduring legacy. These are depicted via traditional measures, such as Shardza's material contributions to religious institutions, including the texts he authored; his successful training of disciples, headed by his nephew and a younger half-brother; and the holy relics and palpable faith engendered by his miraculous passing. On all of these registers, he demonstrates qualities of fundamental virtue as well as ultimate sanctity, embodying what for his disciple represented an ideally integrated vision of the religious life. I also observe here that Shardza's legacy also includes his remembered image, biographically constructed through particular categories and with an awareness of potentially contesting voices. This chapter thus reviews some of the most significant conceptual distinctions to set the parameters for understanding a Bön religious life in nineteenth and twentieth century Kham. Involving vital terms such as Practice Lineage (*bshad brgyud*), Long-standing Tradition (*ring lugs*), and Treasure-revealer (*gter ston*), I conclude by reflecting on how these designations were used to situate Shardza within a particular religious landscape sketched out by our author.

In Part II of this work, I provide an annotated translation of the condensed (*mdor bstus*) edition of Shardza's life-story. The translation offers the reader an extended look into the rich body of material constituting the most popular and widely-circulated Bönpo example of this important Tibetan genre, and it is my hope that this previously inaccessible text will be of interest to a number of potential audiences. General readers and those associated with the Bön tradition may especially derive meaning from the

inspirational quality of the original work. Non-specialist readers with an interest in religious narrative and comparative hagiography may also find that this example of Tibetan life-writing repays their attention. I especially hope that other researchers in Tibetan Studies will be encouraged to take up work on any number of the myriad subjects alluded to here, not least of which would be the texts of Shardza himself. As mentioned in the acknowledgements, this undertaking has been made possible thanks to the unstinting support of the head of the Bön lineage in exile, Lungtok Tenpé Nyima, and the monks of Menri monastery. Many of the annotations that have been provided owe a great debt to these contributors. I hasten to add, however, that the responsibility for the work's final outcome, with its inevitable misreadings and inaccuracies, is entirely mine. The translation itself has been rendered from two editions of *The Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees*, one a xylographic printing borrowed from the Menri abbot's collection, and the other a modern typeset version published in China. For specialist readers, a critical edition from these two sources has been appended to the translation in Wylie transliteration.

CHAPTER 1

Behind the Text: Underlying Controversy in 20th Century Bön

While the biographies of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen provide a reader with insight into specific aspects of Tibetan cultural history, they are also meaningfully shaped by them. Tangible products of the dynamic and exceptional circumstances of 20th century eastern Tibet, these texts depend for their very authorship and distribution upon local religious economies, both 'real' and in the symbolic sense asserted by Bordieu. If, as Janet Gyatso suggests, "one of the polemical agendas of life-story writing in Tibet [is] to assert the religious achievements of a master and his or her lineage in contrast to those of rival schools," then it behooves an interpreter to examine the competitive and sectarian forces that may well be at work in these local venues.¹⁹

This is not to say that Shardza's disciple, Kelzang Tenpé Gyaltsen, does not undertake authorship first and foremost as a religious act. Like other Tibetan biographers, he performs a demanding work of piety, explicitly aiming to depict his teacher's saintly attributes as a source of inspiration and edification—perhaps for himself as well as for others. However, the very nature of these saintly attributes and the manner in which they are conveyed bear witness to a larger socio-cultural arena within which the project takes place. For example, Shardza's idealized virtues are at times extolled at the expense of anonymous others who represent a number of religious types populating the local landscape, including greedy, town-dwelling ritualists, foolish and immoral pseudo-Tantric practitioners, and haughty, self-important scholastics. While these literary

¹⁹ Gyatso 1998, p.103.

caricatures may be somewhat cliché—perhaps more a matter of rhetorical flourish than pointed criticism of actual persons—part of an interpreter's challenge is to investigate the possible implications of their use, and to understand how a figure like Shardza is situated amongst the legitimate and varied religious alternatives of his day.

It is both instructive and necessary, then, to frame our inquiry into the religious and literary dimensions of these works by first considering a number of key factors 'behind the text', specific developments within the larger religious and cultural setting that have exerted a major impact on Shardza's biographies. Moving from the general to the specific, our analysis begins with the single most vibrant, widespread and momentous cultural development to pervade eastern Tibet during Shardza's lifetime: the *rimé* (*ris med*) movement.

The Climate of *Rimé*

The 'non-partisan,' 'non-sectarian,' 'universalist' or *rimé* (*ris med*) movement represents no less than the most far-reaching and broadly influential phenomenon to mold the Tibetan religious terrain of Shardza's lifetime. It refers to an important constellation of socio-religious trends encompassing many leading Buddhist figures and institutions in the Tibetan areas of Kham and Amdo, and it has been aptly described by Gene Smith as, "without a doubt, the most important development during the 19th century in the Lamaist world."²⁰ A development, one might add, with continuing and substantial influence on Tibetan religion down to the present day.

The dynamic atmosphere that prevailed during this period has been rightly credited with facilitating unprecedented levels of collaboration across sectarian lines, with the

²⁰ Smith 1970, p. 2-3.

products of these inter-sectarian efforts highly conspicuous in the texts and practices currently in use among Tibetan Buddhist lineages. While very little scholarship has thus far considered the impact of this major development upon the Bön religion, Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen is consistently represented as the most significant member of his order to actively participate, a topic to be further explored below.

Generally speaking, the historical roots of the *rimé* movement can be traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth century revival and adaptation of institutions belonging to the Nyingma sect in Kham. Comprising part of a complex border zone situated between imperial China and the central Tibetan government in Lhasa, Kham functioned during this period as a politically decentralized "patchwork of small secular and monastic states," creating a heterogeneous climate within which new monasteries and charismatic individuals from several sects found support.²¹ The religiously plural and multicultural atmosphere of Kham—which included partially 'Tibetanized' ethnic minorities in the south, nomadic populations in the north, and a *mélange* of communities with varying forms of subsistence activities, social structure, and political administration throughout—created conditions unfavorable to religious homogeneity or exclusivism. Trends toward religious tolerance in the region were further reinforced by the ruling family in the influential center of Degé, which had experienced considerable turmoil—including the exile of the ruling queen—due to sectarian rivalries between members of Sakya and Nyingma lineages that resulted in open conflict at the close of the eighteenth century.²²

²¹ Under the primary patronage of the ruling family of Dergé, several important Nyingma monasteries, as well as key Sakya and Kagyu institutions, were established, and the influence of visionary figures such as Jigmé Lingpa (1730-1798) became highly significant.

²² As Smith explains, "These depressing events exercised a formative influence on the development of the eclectic approach that should not be underestimated.... While restating the time-honored special relationship that existed between the House of Sde-dge and the Sa-skyapa sects, [the prince] re-affirms

This state of affairs stands in stark contrast to the religious culture of central Tibet during this period. Having assumed power through Mongolian support in the mid-seventeenth century, the dominant Geluk school under the 'great fifth' Dalai Lama (1617-1682) exercised both political and religious authority that was widely felt. While Geluk influence was at its peak in central Tibet, it also made inroads into the semi-autonomous provinces of Kham, where Gelukpa institutions were newly established, sometimes at the expense of their political rivals. Most famously, this period witnessed the official suppression of the 'heretical' Jonang sect, marked by the forced conversion or destruction of monasteries as well as the banning of books, positioning the ruling Gelukpas as a potent and conservative force. More likely than not, these developments also sowed the seeds of later resistance and solidarity among members of the non-Geluk lineages.

In the ensuing period, regents for the large Geluk monasteries in central Tibet sought to consolidate political power after the fifth Dalai Lama's death, while sectarian Geluk scholars sought to further secure their position as arbiters of valid religious doctrine. By the nineteenth century, however, this approach had led the Geluks to promote an increasingly textbook-style approach to education—based on strictly sectarian traditions of exegesis—which had become progressively more formalized since the fifteenth century. Backed by state power and typified by an orthodox methodology centered on celibate monasticism, exoteric sources, and the procedures of formal monastic debate, Geluk religious education provoked a forceful reaction among those who would become the leading proponents of *rimé*. As Gene Smith puts it, famous *rimé* figures such as Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (*'jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po*, 1820-1892) and

that a commitment to tolerance and generous patronage to all schools should be the basis of the religious policy of Sde-dge and, by implication, of any well-governed state (Smith 1970, p. 24-5)."

Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thayé (*'jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas*, 1813-1899) rejected the 'intellectual petrification' associated with Geluk scholasticism, instead advocating fresh interpretations of original Indic texts across sectarian lines.²³ This ultimately led to a reformulation of curricular materials among the non-Geluk sects, which served as a basis for new schools for doctrinal study and interpretation (*bshad grwa*).

Under the banner of the expansive, all-embracing rhetoric of 'Great Perfection' or Dzokchen texts, *rimé* leaders from a number of Buddhist lineages thus adopted a 'universalist' or 'ecumenical' stance that proved immensely popular. Rather than forming a sect of their own or advocating a definitive system of tenets, *rimé* lamas instead maintained their own individual traditions while seeking to collect and preserve whatever was efficacious amidst the diverse religious landscape, eventually producing new and influential systemizations of doctrine in what Samuel has called "a renewal of the academic and intellectual traditions within the non-Gelugpa schools." Although little explored in scholarship to date, it may be noted that the centrality of Dzokchen tradition in this movement provided a promising avenue for Bönpos to contribute. For while they disagreed with their Buddhist contemporaries on matters as fundamental as the status of the Buddha Shakyamuni, Bönpos shared with the Nyingmas the position that the Dzokchen view represented the apex of all doxographical systems, and they maintained vigorous traditions of practice associated with it. Shardza's own keen interest in practicing and writing about Dzokchen undoubtedly left him well-positioned to participate in this type of dialogue.

²³ Smith 1970, p. 26.

A related and fundamental feature of *rimé* involves its focus on the collection, organization and transmission of diverse streams of esoteric practice in ways that valued experiential efficacy over and above rigorous adherence to orthodox scholarly methodologies, such as the categories and procedures of Geluk-style monastic debate. In what might be described as a contemplatively-based approach to hermeneutics, *rimé* authors reinterpreted material from the ancient past—including imperial mythology, the cult of Padmasambha, the Gesar epic, and ritual praxis from older Tantras—in light of ongoing new revelations. So it was that several leading *rimé* scholars were also known as inspired visionaries, including both Khyentsé and Kongtrul, and a number of newly disclosed 'treasure texts' came to prominence. Many of these 'treasures' won great popularity, imbuing local landscapes with esoteric meaning and asserting karmic connections between contemporary figures and Tibet's greatest religious and political leaders.

The same spirit of accommodation that allowed for the possibility of new revelation also applied to the religious lifestyle. Those who embodied different types of religious power and authority found support among the many small principalities scattered amidst the remote plains and river valleys, such that "the ideal *rimé* practitioner was as likely to be an unordained yogin as a celibate monk."²⁴ Indeed, some of the most famous and popular figures of the day were known for their unconventionally, quintessentially

²⁴ Samuel 1993, p. 540. Concerning the issue of celibacy and the yogi vs. monastic ideal, Samuel adds: "Many important Rimed masters were not celibate monks, and several senior reincarnate lamas who were influenced by the Rimed movement took female consorts.... There were also many celibate monks among the Rimed movement, however, and as time went on they probably became more common. The essence of Rimed teaching was not to reject one path (e.g., monasticism) in favor of another (such as that of the lay yogin) but to maintain all paths as possible options that might be suitable for particular students (Samuel, p. 540-541)."

Tantric behavior, while others followed a more sober course dedicated to monastic precepts and purity.

Bönpo Developments

Naturally, the large-scale changes in religious climate precipitated by Geluk conservatism and the *rimé* response had a profound effect on trends with the minority Bön tradition as well. In fact, what can be envisioned as two regional orientations emerged, each with a distinctive approach to the perpetuation of Bön religious culture. On the one hand, the Bön religious authorities in central Tibet shared conservative trends with their prevailing Geluk neighbors, undertaking scholastic-style training, demarcating normative texts and transmission lines, and emphasizing monastic precepts. Conversely, their counterparts in the eastern provinces were more likely to share in *rimé*'s more liberal appraisals of diverse texts and practices that were newly appearing, and they were more likely to be engaged in various forms of dialogue and collaboration with their non-partisan Buddhist contemporaries.

In central Tibet, the Bön tradition was headquartered at Menri monastery, which was situated in Tsang province about two day's journey west of the capital of Lhasa. Menri was established in 1405 on the foundations, metaphorically speaking, of prior small-scale Bön institutions by the 'peerless' Nyammé Sherap Gyantsen (*mnya' med shes rab rgyal mtshan*, 1356-1415), who continues to be revered by Bönpos as the consolidator of an extremely valuable spiritual heritage. The institution he founded, and its affiliated 'branch' monasteries of Yungdrung Ling (*g.yung drung gling*) and Kharna (*mkhar sna*),²⁵

²⁵ Yungdrung Ling was founded in 1834 by Nangtön Dawa Gyantsen (*snang ston zla ba rgyal mtshan*, b. 1796) and Kharna was established within a few decades by his disciple, Sherap Yungdrung (*shes rap g.yung drung*, b. 1838)

came to be collectively known as the Drasa (*grwa sa*), "the monks' place." Together they became an authoritative center for Bön as an institutionalized religion. Emphasizing the transmission of monastic precepts, the scholarly compositions of founding figures, and the ritual traditions inherited from the Dru family lineage, the Bön monasteries in central Tibet fashioned themselves as conservators of the ancient, orthodox Bön tradition.²⁶

In the east, Bön evolved differently. In keeping with the trends of their Buddhist contemporaries and their eclectic patrons, their own history of distinctive family lineage traditions, and the needs of their largely autonomous, localized populations of supporters, a broader range of teachings and practices found expression. Moreover, relationships with Buddhist institutions and individuals seem to have benefited from somewhat more egalitarian dynamics, such that they were decidedly more cordial.²⁷ As previously mentioned, the religious landscape in the east accommodated different types of religious specialists including, but not limited to, celibate clerics. Among these Bönpo specialists were 'treasure-revealers' or *tertön*, including noteworthy figures such as Kundrol Drakpa (*kun grol grags pa*, b.1700), Dechen Lingpa (*bde chen gling pa*, b. 1833) and others with close ties to Buddhists.²⁸ At least some of the revelatory material these individuals

²⁶ I have yet to see anything in print that discusses why the central Tibetan expression of Bön may have developed along these lines, but it seems clear that the dominant presence of the Geluk institutions played a role in this 'reformed' edition of Bön. By the nineteenth century, Yungdrung Ling monks were engaged in Geluk-style monastic debate as part of their study program for *geshé* degrees, and during the twentieth century, if not before, some Bönpo monks—including the present-day head of the lineage—were known to spend some time clandestinely training in Geluk monastic colleges in Lhasa.

²⁷ According to Tsering Thar, "History and geographical proximity impacted the relationship between Bon and Buddhist monasteries. In fact, there was little disparity in number between them, and this led to their relative balance.... For this reason, religious prejudice and discrimination among the Bonpo and Buddhist sects in Kham was much less evident than in the Central Tibetan and Amdo regions [and] the position of the Bon religion was much better in Kham...." He further mentions that Rdzong gsar in Sde dge had been linked to Ri spun monastery, and both had once been Bön institutions. As a result, they continued to enjoy friendly relations even as rdzong gsar became a leading Sa skya monastery (Tsering Thar 2002, p. 163).

²⁸ Dechen Lingpa, for example, counted among his principle teachers leading Buddhist figures including Jamgön Kongtrul, the *tertön* Chogyur Lingpa (*mchog gyur gling pa*, 1829-1870), and the 14th Karmapa, Thekchok Dorjé (*theg mchog rdo rje*, 1798-1868) (Achard 2004, p. xxii).

disclosed was suspiciously appraised by the Bönpo orthodoxy in central Tibet, on the grounds that these newly revealed treasures went too far in openly incorporating Buddhist figures and liturgical styles.

The movement among certain Bönpo toward more overt rapprochement with Buddhists thus became a primary basis for an important distinction within the Bön tradition. This division, between so-called Bön Sarma (*bon gsar ma*, 'New Bön') and Bön Nyingma (*bon rnying ma*, 'Old Bön'), became one of the most contentious points of debate among members of the lineage during this period, as well as an openly contested issue in the characterization of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen's life, with important consequences for his reputation and that of his followers. It is therefore to a more detailed look at the meaning of these critical terms that we now turn.

Distinguishing Bön Nyingma and Bön Sarma

While the distinction between 'Old Bön' and 'New Bön' now seems to be quite well-known to Bön monastics and laypeople, as well as to western scholars of Bön, it is interesting to note that an actual classification based on these terms does not appear in Bönpo historical texts.²⁹ This seems to reveal their relatively recent origin as well as to suggest their potentially controversial nature. For indeed, as we shall see below, the terms could be (and were in fact) used evaluatively and for polemical purposes. While these designations were not used exclusively in this way, it is probably telling that contemporary writers—including Shardza himself as well as the 20th century Bönpo historian Palden Tsultrim (*dpal ldan tshul khrims*, 1904-1972)—avoided mention of this

²⁹ Cech 1987, citing Karmay, pp. 52.

potentially loaded distinction in their works. This creates some difficulty in establishing definitive criteria for understanding the division of Bön along these lines.

Most fundamentally, it is fair to say that Bön Nyingma or 'Old Bön' has come to represent the authoritative standard against which subsequent innovations are to be measured. Following the highly-esteemed contemporary Bönpo scholar Tenzin Namdak, Cech has associated the term with Bön as it developed around the aforementioned central Tibetan Bönpo monasteries collectively known as the Drasa, a major site for Bönpo learning with antecedents stretching back to the eleventh century.³⁰ The term therefore represents the institutional, textual and ritual legacies associated with this center of monastic authority, an important source for the codification of texts, the composition of commentaries and the transmission of precepts. Thus far, the term Old Bön appears to be synonymous with that of 'Eternal (or Unchanging) Bön,' alias 'Yungdrung Bön' (*g.yung drung Bön*), a term scholars generally associate with the post-tenth century tradition that began with the discovery of hidden treasure texts (*gter ma*), headed primarily by the finds and dissemination of Shenchen Luga (*gshen chen klu dga*, 996-1035).

It is interesting to note, however, that the term 'Old Bön' as presented by Cech—following the guidance of Tenzin Namdak—does not seem to represent the full array of ancient material associated with Bön tradition. She in fact distinguishes as a separate category the material transmitted through Bönpo family lineages (*gdung brgyud*). This is intended ostensibly to reflect a chronology, within which the period of family lineage transmission represents the earliest phase of the tradition, bridging the gap from the

³⁰ Prior to the founding of Menri in 1405, two Bön centers had previously existed in the area: a monastery named Palden Zangri (dpal ldan bzang ri) had been founded in Tsang by Tsultrim Palchen (tshul khrims dpal chen, b. 1052), and Yeru Ensaka (g.yas ru dben sa kha) had been founded in 1072 in Tsang by Dru Yungdrung Lama (bru g.yung drung bla ma). It was destroyed by flood during the lifetime of Nyammé Sherap Gyaltzen, precipitating the founding of Menri.

Tibetan imperial period up to the founding of major monastic centers.³¹ Nevertheless, as Döndrup Lhagyal demonstrates, five of the six ancient Bönpo family lineages of Shen, Dru, Pa, Me'u, Zhu and Khyung (*gshen, bru, spa, me'u, zhu* and *khyung*) have survived up to the present day and have made their presence felt in the development and endurance of monasteries, with many monastic seats (*gdan sa*) established by lineage lamas continuing alongside the better-known 'monk's place' in central Tibet.³² Therefore, the association of 'Old Bön' with the Drasa institutions may reveal something about the orthodox sensibilities on the part of those who have upheld the Drasa legacy. Nevertheless, the term 'Old Bön' has unquestionably come to be associated with the Menri lineage, and its affiliated central Tibetan monasteries, which together represent "the tradition of the Great Nyammé Sherap Gyaltsen," a phrase common in Shardza's biographies.

Against this general background of orthodoxy, there appear to be at least three main criteria for determining what constitutes Bön Sarma or 'New Bön', at least one of which is likely to come into play when the term is used to describe a text, practice, individual or institution. These include the authoritative influence of certain treasure-revealers (*gter ston*) and their texts; the understanding of and importance accorded to the ambiguous figure Pema Tongdrol (*pa dma mthong grol*), alias Pema Chungné (*pa dma 'byung gnas*); and the practice of divergent methods of chanting and ritual performance, which either

³¹ In Cech's words, "The importance of the lineages lies in the fact that, prior to the eleventh century, they acted as a repository for pre-Buddhist religious beliefs, preserving and consolidating them in the face of repeated Buddhist threats and persecutions. Although it is difficult to say exactly when the lineage tradition evolved to provide a focus for religious assembly and ritual practice, it can be said with some certainty that monasteries were being founded by lineage members from the eleventh century onwards (Cech 1987: 54)."

³² cf. Lhagyal 2000.

reflect alternatives to the Drasa system or assimilate Buddhist performative styles. The following addresses each of these criteria in turn.

Influential Treasure-Revealers

The first measure for determining what constitutes New Bön—and whether the designation is intended pejoratively or not—is intimately related to open questions about the validity and value of ongoing revelation. For members of the Bön tradition, responses to the phenomenon of 'New Treasure' (*gter gsar*) range broadly.³³ At one end of the spectrum, newly revealed religious 'treasures' are vigorously affirmed as representative of fresh, uniquely efficacious spiritual methods and insights especially well suited to the times, rendering them worthy of special attention. Such sentiments have generally been shared among the disciples and patrons of the treasure-revealers themselves. At the opposite pole, some have suspiciously assessed more recent revelations as the product of the personal ambition of unscrupulous charismatics, exacerbated by the thirst for novelty on the part of fickle patrons. This view—less boldly asserted—is typically associated with scholars or *geshé* and others upholding traditional orthodoxy.³⁴

An important and related question concerns the position of treasure-revealers and their supporters and critics with respect to the monastic vows. The majority of such revealers in both Bön and Nyingma tradition are Tantric lay practitioners—indeed the

³³ For a listing of recent Bonpo treasure revelations (*gter gsar*) as presented by Shardza, see Karmay 1972. Shardza mentions that the term 'New Treasure' in his day had come to refer to treasure discovered after the time of Shelzhig Yungdrung Gyalwa (alias Mishik Dorjé) (Karmay 1972: 191). For more on this and related figures, see below.

³⁴ Tenpé Gyaltzen himself insinuates that such fraudulent treasures are rampant, paraphrasing Shardza when he wrote that "nowadays, when the world is full of things that are like treasure but are not [real] treasure, it is very important not to be discouraged about the Victorious One's teachings (PSTS 93)." However, the only quoted material he provides from an orthodox lama on the subject finds the speaker only going so far as to say, "It is difficult for us to accept the type of thing that has arisen as a new class of Bön, and it is not a tradition that we hold to be valuable (*bon sde gsar pa byung rigs la khas len dka' zhing gtsigs su 'dzin srol med*. NBT 295.4)."

active presence of a consort is often considered essential to the revelatory process. Given that significant criticism of Bönpo New Treasure has arisen from clerical circles, there is little doubt that tensions concerning celibate vs. non-celibate lifestyles influenced the status of treasure in the minds of some—a topic to which we shall have occasion to return. Somewhere in between these two ideal types are many who view the material as supplementary to the established corpus, with varying opinions as to which material merits attention and how much it should actually command.

Bönpos have generally acknowledged that the individuals most representative of this more recent current of revelation can be designated as the 'quartet of reincarnate lamas' (*sprul sku rnam bzhi*), individuals who are identified as influential sources of New Treasure. Shardza himself, in his historical work *The Treasury of Good Sayings* (*legs bshad mdzod*) identifies this quartet as: Loden Nyingpo (*blo ldan snying po*, 1360-1385), Mishik Dorjé, alias Shelzhig Yungdrung Gyalpo (*mi shig rdo rje, shel zhig g.yung drung rgyal po*, b. 1650), Sanggyé Lingpa (*sangs gyas gling pa*, b. 1705), and Kundrol Drakpa Jatsön Nyingpo (*kun drol grags pa 'ja' mtshon snying po*, b. 1700).³⁵

In an interesting twist that points to the contested nature of the boundaries that concern us (and thus reveals something of the problems inherent in attempting to demarcate them), it turns out that Drasa authorities do not, to my knowledge, refer to this quartet as such. This owes to the fact that the first of these figures, Loden Nyingpo, is responsible for revealing the commonly-accepted, full-length version of the biography of Tonpa Shenrap, the founder of Bön—a very important source for all Bönpos. Thus, some

³⁵ cf. Karmay 1972: 185-6, 343. Rinzin Yungdrung mentioned in an interview that Shardza was not the originator of this four-fold association. See also Cech 1987, p. 73, n. 34-37 for some additional information on each of these individuals. She notes here that Sanggyé Lingpa "officially declared that such a movement as 'New Bon' existed."

who represent the 'Old' tradition reportedly have argued that Loden Nyingpo should not be included in this quartet, and a fairly recent Bönpo history written in the Menri exile community by the late Palden Tsultrim avoids the issue by instead referring to a 'trio of reincarnate lamas' (*sprul sku rnam gsum*).³⁶ During an interview about Shardza and New Bön, one Menri *geshé*, Nyima Kunkhyab, described an alternate 'quartet of treasure-revealers', identical to the above except Dechen Lingpa (*bde chen gling pa*, b. 1833) was included in place of Loden Nyingpo.³⁷

Regardless of this apparent lack of consensus on who best exemplified the Bönpo New Treasure movement, the individuals included under this rubric clearly represented a religious type mirroring that seen among Buddhist *rimé* figures. For the Bönpo orthodoxy, these personages collectively appear to have symbolized an unusual and, at least in some cases, an ill-advised combination of eclectic religious experience and textual production. Despite their esoteric accomplishments—such as the 'rediscovery' of sacred texts through dreams, visions, and other paranormal experiences—these figures were generally not envisioned as especially well-educated; i.e., properly trained in traditional exegesis or the nuances of scholastic precision. This partly explained why the texts they transmitted could so easily range across sectarian boundaries. Nevertheless, their careers found precedent in the lives and prophecies of hallowed personas from the imperial past—such as the eighth century figures Vairocana and Drenpa Namkha (*dran*

³⁶ On this point and for his views in general on the subject of the distinction between Old and New Bön, I am deeply indebted to Rinzin Yungdrung (*rig 'dzin g.yung drung*), the current chant leader (*dbu mdzad*) at Menri who comes from Tengchen Ritro Gon (*steng chen ri khrod dgon*, formally known as *kun drol mthong brag ri khod*) monastery in Tibet, a hermitage associated with New Bön. At the urging of His Holiness, he has undertaken research on this topic that he was kind enough to share with me during an interview in November, 2000.

³⁷ Personal communication from Geshe Nyima Kunkhyab, Sarnath, Dec. 1999. I expect that his designation of these individuals as 'the quartet of treasure-revealers' (*gter ston rnam bzhi*) as opposed to 'the quartet of reincarnate lamas' (*sprul sku rnam bzhi*) was an oversight, as he was speaking from memory.

pa nam mkha')³⁸—and they continue to be echoed in the activities of others similarly engaged in circulating newly disclosed texts.

The fact that these texts were revelatory in nature had important consequences for the autonomy of the texts so revealed. Treasure-revealers differed from authors in their degree of authority over the content of their texts—or apparent lack thereof. Indeed, divine agents (such as celestial goddesses, *mkha' 'gro ma*) and prophetic predictions from ancient masters were cited as the primary impetus behind both the timing and the substance of the revelation, so that the revealers themselves were distanced from the meaning of their discoveries, even when the material was disclosed in an entirely intimate and personal way (e.g., as in 'mental treasure', *dgong gter*, or 'pure vision', *dag snang*). Thus, despite the fact that these materials were often arranged and edited by the literati, they remained beyond the control of orthodoxy in significant ways.

Many of these discoverers, including those identified in the 'quartet of reincarnate lamas', had close connections with Buddhist lineages or were known to have discovered both Buddhist and Bönpo treasures.³⁹ For more conservative individuals, who feel special

³⁸ Vairocana and Drenpa Namkha are cited as examples of realized beings that were beyond partiality for either Bön or Buddhism and, owing to circumstances, adapted as necessary by converting to Buddhism. They nevertheless were envisioned as great upholders of Bön. On Drenpa Namkha, Shardza reproduces a section from the *srid rgyud* in which Drenpa Namkha says: "The king sPu-rgyal of Tibet,/ And ignorant living beings,/ Buddhists and Bonpos who are sitting here,/ believe in a religion which does not exist./ If you desire to make the kingdom white,/ And wish to attain Enlightenment,/ Why do you differentiate between me and you?/ Why do you make a distinction between Bön and Buddhism?" He goes on to add, "A person who had attained realization / Would not have made a distinction between Bön and Buddhism./ He would make no distinction between his son and his enemy./ Firstly, the king is mighty./ Secondly, the Buddhists are jealous./ Thirdly, I have no (feeling of) partiality for anything./ Therefore, I shall be ordained (Karmay 1972:91)."

³⁹ Rinzin Yungdrung, for instance, mentioned that Mishik Dorjé has a Guru Drakpo (*gu ru drag po*, "The Wrathful Guru") treasure, which is clearly a practice for Guru Rinpoche, a.k.a. Padmasambhava. Similarly, Sanggyé Lingpa has a "Wrathful Drenpa [Namkha]" (*dran pa drag po*) practice that is viewed similarly, while Kundrol has "so many of these kinds of things that are not in our [old treasure] texts." Karmay also mentions that "some Buddhist texts were also passed on orally to [Mishik Dorjé] (Karmay 1972: 185, n.3)." The generally non-partisan nature of these paranormal discoveries is commonly recognized, and is evident in the findings of treasure-revealers Shardza knew well, such as Sangngak

responsibility to protect and preserve Bönpo tradition as they understand it, this has contributed significantly to feelings of ambivalence (if not active suspicion) about New Treasure discovery, a phenomena that western scholarship is only just beginning to explore, but which enjoyed widespread popularity among both Bönpo in eastern Tibet during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Lotus-Born

Among proponents of the New Treasure tradition in Buddhist circles, no figure was more central to the cult of new revelation than Padmasambhava, the lotus-born guru credited with the first spread of Buddhism in Tibet and the subsequent concealment of hidden treasures—exceptional teachings to be retrieved at the opportune moment in history by the karmically predestined. In Bönpo circles, the status of an ambiguous figure named Pema Chungné (*pa dma 'byung gnas*), 'he who originated from a lotus,' or Pema Tongdrol (*pa dma mthong grol*), 'he whose lotus [crown causes] liberation upon sight' provides one important index for determining what separates New Bön from Old. How is this figure conceived and what place, if any, does he occupy in Bönpo worship or liturgy? Alongside the question of New Treasure (*gter gsar*) to which it is closely related, the status of Pema Chungné is at the forefront of the Bön Nyingma/Sarma debate. As the former Menri chant-leader Rinzin Yungdrung explained, people in his village use the term 'New Bön' to describe someone who has faith in Pema Chungné.

Is the Pema Bönpos write about the same person as the famous 'Precious Guru' Padmasambhava, who stands at the heart of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism? Opinions on this question have varied among Bönpo over the centuries, with different

Lingpa. See also below on Bonzhig Yungdrung Lingpa (*g.yung drung gling pa*, b. 1228?), alias Dorjé Lingpa (*rdo rje gling pa*).

stances taken on the identity of this legendary persona. While this topic deserves attention beyond what is possible here, preliminary research reveals that a useful point of departure for understanding the dynamics involved can be found in a trio of figures the tradition describes. Collectively known as Drenpa Yabsé Sum (*dran pa yab sras gsum*, "The trio of Drenpa, father and sons") this expression refers to the Bönpo sage Drenpa Namkha and his two sons, Tsewang Rinzin (*tshe dbang rig mdzin*) and Pema Tongdrol (*padma mthong grol*) or Pema Chungné (*padma 'byung gnas*).⁴⁰ This trio has been especially important as objects of veneration for Bönpos in eastern Tibet, who consider these three teachers as spiritual guides exceptionally well-suited for the times.⁴¹ There is some disagreement within the Bön tradition, however, concerning the identity and the history of these important characters.

The earliest reference to this triad of Drenpa Namkha and his two sons can be traced back to the thirteenth century treasure discoveries of Bönzhig Yungdrung Lingpa (*bon zhig g.yung drung gling pa*, b. 1228), alias Dorjé Lingpa (*rdo rje gling pa*), materials that also include the influential Tsewang Böyulma (*tshe dbang bod yul ma*) cycle and Dzokchen and Tantric materials believed to have been concealed by the legendary Bönpo-turned-Buddhist master Vairocana.⁴² Worship and meditation on Drenpa and his sons was not confined solely to progressive, visionary elements of the tradition, however. For while Yungdrung Lingpa would retrospectively stand as an originator of New Bön

⁴⁰ This trio is also referred to in Bon texts as "The Immortal Father and Sons," Chimé Yabsé Sum (*'chi med yab sras gsum*)

⁴¹ This is evident in the widespread popularity of a Preliminary Practice (*sngon 'dro*) text known as the Kusum Chutril (*sku gsum chu dril*) devoted to the trio.

⁴² Karmay 1972: 175-176. These were disclosed in two discoveries; the first was reported to have occurred in 1250, the second in 1269, though it is possible the correct date of the latter may be 1291 or 1279; cf. Karmay 1972: xxxvii-xxxviii. Preliminary research reveals that Buddhist sources give Dorjé Lingpa's dates as 1346-1405, which are significantly later.

tradition, he was joined in his devotion to Drenpa and his sons by Tsungmé Sönam Lodrö (*bru mtshungs med bsod nams blo gros*, 1277-1341), a member of the influential Dru family and an abbot of one of Menri monastery's forerunners in central Tibet. In fact, Sönam Lodrö composed a supplication prayer to Drenpa and sons that remains widely used outside of the Drasa today.

The prayer attributed to Sönam Lodrö includes reference to Pema Tongdrol, Pema Chungné and Pema Tötreng (*pad ma thod phreng*, "Padma [with] a Garland of Skulls"), that last of which is familiar to Buddhists as a secret epithet of Guru Rinpoche.⁴³ While one might be tempted to assume that the collective use of these names establishes that they were intended to refer back to a single individual—one who would therefore be connected to both Bönpo and Nyingma lineages—a number of leading Bönpos have argued to the contrary. Some, for example, distinguish Pema Tongdrol, a name which tends to appear more frequently in older Bönpo texts, from the individual known as Pema Chungné—an appellation that naturally is associated with (and literally translates) the name of the famous Buddhist guru Padmasambhava.⁴⁴ Even in the many cases where the name Pema Chungné does appear in Bönpo texts, the question for later generations of Bönpo scholars has remained as to whether this Pema Chungné should be understood as identifiable with the Buddhist Padmasambhava or not.

One prominent authority to address this matter was the twenty-fourth abbot of Menri, Nyima Tenzin (*nyi ma bstan 'dzin*, b. 1813) who articulates the history of these personages in his well-known chronological table (*bstan rtsis*).⁴⁵ His account is predicated first on the widely-accepted notion that there were two individuals bearing the

⁴³ Personal communication from Rinzin Yungdrung, Nov. 2000.

⁴⁴ Personal communication from Rinzin Yungdrung, Nov. 2000.

⁴⁵ cf. Kvaerne 1988: 226-227.

name Drenpa Namkha; one was an individual from the ancient past known as Khöpfung (*khod spungs*) or Zhangzhung (*zhang zhung*) Drenpa Namkha (b. 914 BCE according to this chronology) while the second, known as Dakpo (*dwags po*) Drenpa Namkha, was traditionally believed to have lived during the time Buddhism first came to Tibet. Nyima Tenzin locates the birth of the twin sons Tsewang Rinzin and Pema Tongdrol in the time of the first Drenpa Namkha (888 BCE), and he further describes how twelve years later, in 876 BCE, Pema Chungné was found by King Indrabodhi in a lotus flower on an island within a lake, which is at least consistent in events (if not in timing) with Buddhist historiography. Nyima Tenzin later describes the coming of "the teacher Padma" to Tibet in connection with the founding of Samyé (*bsam yas*) monastery in 738 CE, some 1,600 years later. Given that extended life-spans were thought possible for highly accomplished beings, it remains possible that traditional scholars might accept this chronology yet still conclude that the later champion of Buddhism was the same as the Bönpo prodigy who appeared to be miraculously born from a lotus. Nyima Tenzin, however, held that they were different individuals.

Nyima Tenzin was not the only Bönpo author to address this issue. The adept Tenzin Rinchen (*bstan 'dzin rin chen*, alias *ka ru grub dbang*, b. 1801) also reportedly wrote that there were two Pemas, but explained what distinguished them differently from Nyima Tenzin.⁴⁶ Less than a century later, Shardza himself made an effort to clarify what Bön accepts about Pema Chungné. Shardza's account depends largely on the treasure of Dorjé Lingpa, is consistent with Nyima Tenzin's early chronology, yet seems to proceed on the assumption that there is one Pema. The main issue he tackles is the question of apparent

⁴⁶ Personal communication from Rinzin Yungdrung, Nov. 2000, awaiting further investigation.

contradiction between Pema's miraculous birth (from the lotus) and the Bön tradition's claim that he was 'womb-born' as the son of Drenpa Namkha.

He begins his explanation by first describing the trio of Drenpa Namkha, Tsewang Rinzin and Pema Chungné as the mind [emanation] of Tönpa Shenrap manifested to benefit sentient beings,⁴⁷ and he then makes the case that Pema Chungné was indeed born as a Bönpo. Like Nyima Tenzin, he identifies Pema first and foremost as the son of Drenpa Namkha—and thereby a Bön lama—who later displayed a miraculous birth at the time of his discovery by Indrabodhi.⁴⁸ This he explains as an inconceivable act for training whomever was appropriate, attested to in authentic histories and narratives on the origins of treasure (*gter byung gi rnam thar lo rgyus khungs thub rnams*). In particular, Shardza makes a point of specifically citing the treasure of Dorjé Lingpa, alias Yungdrung Lingpa (*g.yung drung gling pa*), whom he describes as "one of five famous treasure-revealers bearing the name Lingpa." The others to whom he refers are all revered members of the Buddhist Nyingma lineage, which is especially relevant since his discussion forms part of a response to the polemical invective of a certain Tenzin Drakpa (*bstan 'dzin grags pa*), a conservative Nyingma from Gyarong.⁴⁹

Shardza provides the following quote from this text to state his case: "The father, the emanation of Kuntu Zangpo, is the wisdom-holder (*rig 'dzin*) Drenpa Namkha, and the mother, the emanation of Kuntu Zangmo, is the daughter of the Indian *dharma* king

⁴⁷ NKHDz 112.5 (9b, l.4)

⁴⁸ For a presentation of these and the following claims about Pema Chungne, cf. NKHDz 145.4 – 149.5 (26a, l.4 – 28a, l.5)

⁴⁹ The work of Shardza to which I refer is *bstan grags kyi brgal lan drang por bshad pa lha mi dgyes pa'i 'bel gtam zhes bya ba bzhugs so*, which is published as part of his *nam mkha mdzod*. Tenzin Drakpa hailed from the Mudo (*dmu rdo*) area of Gyalmorong (*rgya mo rong*) and wrote a contentious work entitled *gti mug klu gyi gdon nad sel byed*; I'm told a stupa holding his remains can still be found at a monastery in that area.

Zangden (*bzang ldan*, Skt. Bhadrīka), Öden Barma (*'od ldan bar ma*), endowed with the thirty-six marks of a celestial goddess. To these two parents, on the tenth day of the monkey-month in the water-monkey year were born two sons who were emanations of the Bliss-gone [Buddha]. The eldest was named Tsewang Rinzin and the younger, Pema Chungné; to them, I pray." The date given here is the same as that provided by Nyima Tenzin, which Kvaerne has determined to be 888 BCE.

Shardza then cites the treasure chronicles of the important Nyingma figure Rinzin Longsel Nyingpo (*rig 'dzin klong gsal snying po*, 1625-1692), which provides a first-person statement from Pema Chungné that confirms his parentage and recounts the circumstances that lead to his discovery in the lake by Indrabodhi, and Shardza concludes his argument by pointing out that these accounts are found in canonical teachings (*bka'*), treasures (*gter*) and oral transmissions (*snyan rgyud*) including Bön chronicles and the treasure of Dorjé Lingpa.⁵⁰

For our purposes, it is enough to observe that the topic had become sufficiently germane to leading Bönpos so as to solicit written remarks at least by the mid-nineteenth century. It appears that a number of Bönpos in Kham during this period were exploring their relationship to the figure of Pema. Many living in the more liberal religious environment of eastern Tibet were probably disinclined to emphasize the differences between Buddhist and Bön conceptions, perhaps prompting orthodox figures like Nyima Tenzin to do so. After all, a shared reverence for Pema Chungné offered significant grounds for inter-religious dialogue within the *rimé* climate, a basis for exchange that

⁵⁰ According to the story, it was Öden Barma, the Indian princess, who realized that Pema would be helpful to Buddhist dharma (*chos*); presumably understanding what would take place, Pema's parents placed him on the island in the lake in order to suppress a demon (*srin po*) in the southwest, where he was subsequently found by Indrabodhi.

complemented the well-established Bönpo commitment to Dzokchen and the lineage's general receptivity to the phenomenon of 'treasure'.

The importance of Pema Chungné as a symbol for this type of exchange is perhaps best attested by the great *rimé* systematizer Jamgon Kongtrul's decision to preserve and transmit a small number of Bön treasure texts that included material on Pema's biography. Despite criticism from within his own ranks, Kongtrul was aware of Bön historiography on Pema Chungné and used it to facilitate the addition of five Bön texts to his authoritative collection of New Treasure, the *Rinchen Terdzö* (*rin chen gter mdzod*).⁵¹ These materials represented the only Bönpo material to find inclusion in this famous *rimé* work.

Under the circumstances it is not surprising to learn that consistent reference to Pema Chungné has therefore been taken as an indication that a given text or practice was 'New Bön'.⁵² However, as a long-standing and popular icon embodying many layers of Tibetan culture, Pema Chungné is capable of representing any one of a number of symbolic roles according to circumstances. For example, his associations with Tibet's ancient kings and some of the hidden treasures attributed to him rendered him an important figure for later Tibetan governments, while his esoteric power, lay status and the promise of continuing revelation has simultaneously served as a model for small-scale communities of yogins. In the present case, it is fair to say that the explicit discussions and differences of opinion

⁵¹ Blondeau, for example, explains that Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thayé, in choosing to include five Bönpo texts amidst his treasure anthology (the *Rinchen Terdzö*, *rin chen gter mdzod*), "grouped the Bönpo texts he included together with biographies of Padmasambhava—who, "according to the tradition of bsgrags-pa bon" is the author of these rituals during a life as the son of the Bönpo sage Dran-pa nam-mkha' (Blondeau 1985:55, translation mine)."

⁵² Rinzin Yungdrung made this point in reference to the work of the 18th century figure Kundrol Drakpa. It is apparently this criterion, in fact, that has led those identifying with the New Bön movement to claim the 14th century treasure-revealer Loden Nyingpo for themselves, based on the fact that his works include many prophecies referring to Pema Chungné, and presumably with no indications that this individual is to be distinguished from the Buddhist guru.

about his life-story are most significant for what they reveal about the broader dynamics of the day, a topic to which we will return shortly.

Ritual Transformation

Before doing so, however, it is essential to highlight another extremely important arena for distinguishing multiple currents of Bön tradition: that of ritual, a sphere that is too easily overlooked in textual scholarship. Contemporary research on the study of ritual has rightly noted how adaptive and flexible ritual traditions can be, even in cases where continuity is highly valued.⁵³ Thus, while Tibetans generally emphasize an essential continuity deriving from an unbroken lineage of transmission in both textual and ritual spheres, Tibetan ritual is hardly fixed and static. And for both monastic scholars and ordinary laypeople, divergences in performative style often create a tangible and significant sense of difference.

The former chant-leader (*dbu mdzad*) for Menri monastery, Rinzin Yungdrung, prefaced his remarks during an interview on the categories of 'Old' and 'New' Bön by suggesting that the issue largely reflected human predilections for creating a competitive atmosphere based on perceived differences. He continued by explaining that if the distinction was not about New Bön *per se*—i.e., New Treasure texts and the veneration of Pema Chungné—it could just as easily center on the difference in chanting styles between the Drasa and other Bönpo monasteries.

It is generally said that each of the Bön family lineages (*gshen*, *bru*, *spa*, *me'u*, *zhu* and *khyung*) maintained its own distinctive style of chanting. The Drasa, for example,

⁵³ Catherine Bell states this well when she writes: "Tradition exists because it is constantly produced and reproduced, pruned for a clear profile, and softened to absorb revitalizing elements.... The maintenance of a tradition through exact duplication of fixed activities is an inherently strategic reproduction and valorization of 'tradition' (Bell 1992: 123)."

utilizes the style inherited from the Dru (*bru*) lineage. Naturally, the monastic seats associated with other Bönpo family lineages would maintain performative traditions associated with their own ancestry, differing as a result from the Drasa's style in cadence, intonation and musical accompaniment. There are also variations in regional styles that an experienced ear would recognize.⁵⁴

Thus, it is not unusual for different Bön monasteries to perform the same ritual texts quite differently, and this performative difference is sometimes what determines whether a practice is deemed 'New Bön'. For example, Menri monks currently perform supplications of Drenpa Namkha following two different ritual texts, *The Spontaneously-Perfect Drenpa* (*dran pa lhun grub*) and *The Practice of the Ultra-Secret Drenpa* (*dran pa yang gsang gi grub pa*), the latter of which was a treasure discovery of Loden Nyingpo.⁵⁵ Given New Bön's claims regarding Loden Nyingpo and the fact that these prayers are chanted in New Bön monasteries, one might wonder if the practices associated with these texts might not fall into the category of New Bön. But while the texts themselves may be identical as found in both the Drasa and New Bön monasteries, the way in which they are read and performed is not the same—a significant difference in the mind of my informant.⁵⁶

Despite the existence of many admitted styles of traditional Bönpo ritual, Bönpos recognize the orthodoxy of the teachings and ritual texts associated with the founding abbot of Menri, Nyammé Sherap Gyaltzen. Rinzin Yungdrung reported that even in New

⁵⁴ Personal communication from HH Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima. I have fond memories of HH demonstrating the *hor pa* style during an interview in Nov, 2000.

⁵⁵ Personal communication from Rinzin Yungdrung, Nov. 2000.

⁵⁶ When I noted that this would seem to make this a New Bön text according to the New Bön perspective, my informant smiled at the rather blunt assertion, but noted that while the text was utilized by both, it was performed differently—so the two were not the same in this important regard.

Bön monasteries, it is generally held that the teachings and ritual texts of Nyammé should be distinguished from others and made most prominent.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the degree to which Nyammé's texts are used varies from monastery to monastery; in his own monastery in Kham, the material was divided fairly evenly between Old and New sources. Even in cases where the percentage of New Bön practice is relatively small, however, the communities are nevertheless designated under the category of New Bön.

The issue of ritual orthodoxy, though an area that is not very well elucidated in the field of Tibetan studies, seems to be at the forefront of the contemporary distinction between Old and New Bön. As is true with regard to the content of New Treasure and the place of Pema Chungné, the performative differences between the Drasa and New Bön monasteries are partly attributed by the Drasa to Buddhist influences. Moreover, these ritual assimilations of external and presumably Buddhist practice traditions have a vital public dimension that seems to set them apart from more inconspicuous instances of assimilation. The presence of Sanskrit terms and mantras, for example, which might also be cited as evidence of Buddhist hybrid material (since Bön scriptures are traditionally understood as wholly deriving from the Zhangzhung language), is not in fact seen as an important factor in determining what is New Bön.⁵⁸

Having examined the fundamentals of Old vs. New Bön, one is left to wonder: why is it that Rinzin Yungdrung suspected that if not for these categories, some other perceived difference would have created a division among various segments of Bönpo? What were

⁵⁷ Rinzin Yungdrung also added that they began everything, as is done at Menri, with the four-line entreaty to Nyamé known as Dechen Gyalpo (*bde chen rgyal po*). This prayer, attributed to the famous founder of the Geluk lineage, Tsongkhapa, has been translated by Cech 1987, p.106

⁵⁸ Personal communication from Rinzin Yungdrung, Nov. 2000.

some of the hidden dynamics within Bön lurking beneath discussions about the sons of Drenpa Namkha?

The Dynamics of Patronage and Prestige

Part of the answer to these questions may lie in the interrelated concerns of patronage and prestige. Beyond the religious and cultural trends that varied geographically, Bönpos additionally faced economic realities that differed by region. Unlike their Gelukpa contemporaries, the Bönpo establishments in central Tibet during Shardza's time benefited from neither the patronage nor the tax revenues of neighboring estates. As the Geluks began consolidating power in the mid-seventeenth century, control over lands that had formerly yielded resources for Bön institutions in central Tibet gradually shifted. For instance, the estate of the Dru clan, which had been responsible for establishing the early Bön monastic center at Yeru and had provided significant support to Menri for several centuries, came to be assimilated by the ascendant Geluk lineage. This process began with the discovery of the second Panchen Lama, Losang Yeshé (*blo bzang ye shes*, 1663-1737) among the Dru family and culminated in the nineteenth century, when the reincarnation of the fifth Panchen, Tenpé Wangchuk (*bstan pa'i dbang phyug*, b. 1885) was again discovered among the Dru, leading to the control of the family's land and resources by the Panchen Lama's seat at Tashi Lhunpo.⁵⁹

The Bönpos were a clear minority in central Tibet, and monastics at Menri, Yungdrung Ling and Kharna needed to look beyond the region for economic resources, with only the nearby Bönpo settlement in the Tobgyal (*thob rgyal*) valley providing a reliable source of local support. An additional source of proceeds came through

⁵⁹ Cech 1987, p. 53, who cites a personal communication from Samten Karmay. See also Cech, p. 125-128.

longstanding relationships with nomads on the northern plains of the Changtang (*byang thang*), who raised yaks owned by the monastery. Once in the Changtang, individual monks would typically offer ritual services to nomads in exchange for meat and provisions that would sustain them through the winter.⁶⁰ However, as Cech explains, "the collection of this income in kind was a time-consuming and a generally unpredictable source of revenue."⁶¹

Thus it was essential for monastic authorities at the central Tibetan institutions to maintain close economic ties with Bönpo populations in Kham and Amdo, where patronage relationships were better established among communities who could be counted on to provide additional income through voluntary donations. Given the economic realities facing Bönpos in central Tibet, it was therefore customary for high-ranking monastic officials to strengthen relations by visiting distant communities and garnering much-needed support. Informal affiliations were undoubtedly established, especially when heads of local monasteries in the eastern borderlands had undergone formal training in the Drasa. As Cech has written, "the difficulty of finding sponsors and donors among the widely-scattered Bönpo community was somewhat facilitated by... tours by the abbot and other famous lamas who lived in the monastery to the areas where the Bönpos lived, [which] brought in donations and pledges of sponsorship."⁶²

The relationship between these distant communities has long represented an important nexus of exchange for Tibetan Bönpos, and on multiple registers. Both lay and monastic pilgrims would traditionally undertake ritual journeys to the holy sites of central

⁶⁰ The present Menri abbot mentioned, for example, that if one were asked to perform a funeral, one might be fortunate enough to receive the meat of one yak that could be successfully bartered for one winter's provisions.

⁶¹ Cech 1987, p. 127.

⁶² Cech 1987, p. 127.

Tibet, contributing both economic and human resources to the institutions there while benefiting spiritually from the opportunity to encounter sacred sites, relics and individuals. Having made such a journey, some Bönpos would remain in central Tibet, receive ordination from the tradition's unequivocally revered source of monastic vows, and embark on a training program that provided religious knowledge, ritual expertise and, for some, social prestige. In their subsequent travels, writings, and administrative positions, prominent monks trained in this way would consequently reinforce the value of the celibate monastic system and the textual and ritual traditions associated with it.

Like their 'non-partisan' Buddhist contemporaries, however, and at times in conjunction with them, Bönpos during this period also achieved prominence in full-fledged religious careers largely independent from the central Tibetan authorities. These careers were not limited to what has been called the 'shamanic' side of Tibetan religious life, but encompassed a full range of literary and philosophical activities, including inspired authorship, innovative exegesis, and scholastic classification. Drawing upon their own religious experiences, religious writers—perhaps best exemplified by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen—were able to produce and circulate new textual, contemplative and ritual systems amidst a vibrant intellectual climate. As the popularity of these innovations grew among increasing numbers of Bön patrons, however, they may have threatened to undermine the vital social and economic patterns that had sustained the orthodox tradition for centuries.

The Sherap Drakpa Affair

The potential for scarce resources to fuel inter-sectarian or intra-sectarian competition is a familiar one against the backdrop of the forbidding Tibetan landscape, and it likely served as an underlying dynamic behind the single most important impetus for the writing of Shardza's biographies: namely, a controversy that ensued from an incident

occurring between Shardza and a *geshé* from the central Tibetan monastery of Yungdrung Ling by the name of Sherap Drakpa (*shes rab grags pa*).⁶³ The account which follows attributes the tensions that developed to either a matter of personal offense or as a matter of doctrine; however, it seems likely that issues of patronage and prestige were just as important.

The story begins when Shardza traveled to the Ngawa (*rnga ba*) region of Amdo in 1920 at the age of sixty-two, in response to repeated invitations from the Bönpo monastery of Togden Gön (*rtogs ldan dgon*, alias *bkra shis 'khyil gling*). As is still the case today, this monastery is situated very near to another (and larger) Bön monastery—Nangzhi (*snang zhi*)—and there is a history of strained relations between the two.⁶⁴ At a time coinciding with Shardza's visit to the region, the *geshé* Sherap Drakpa was visiting the nearby Nangzhi.

With two distinguished lamas visiting the area, a decision was made to jointly stage a religious event in a tent set up in an open area between the two monasteries. However,

⁶³ The general outline of the story is well-known, with some slight variations in emphasis. My sources for the following material are the oral accounts provided by a number of different Bonpo monks associated with Menri monastery in exile, many of whom are also connected with eastern Tibetan monasteries. They include a limited cross-section of individuals from different generations, provinces of Tibet, and with different degrees of distance from the principle actors involved. Those I interviewed on the subject include the current Menri throneholder, HH Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima, Geshe Nyima Dakpa, Geshe Nyima Kunkhyab, Togden Sherab Dargye, and Dungri Lama Shedrup Gyaltzen. These were conducted with help from the Menri monks Druksé Tenzin, Sonam Gyaltzen, and Kelsang Norbu.

⁶⁴ Sherap Dargyé (*shes rab dar rgyas*), a Togden monk studying at Menri, explained that a disagreement developed around the representation of monks from the two monasteries at the performance of household rites and funerals in the area. Evidently there was an established custom of inviting one monk from Togden for every two from Nangzhi (a much larger institution) for such occasions, and this system had worked well in the area up to a certain time. However, some families began to invite monks from only Togden and others from only Nangzhi. The lamas reportedly did not have a problem with this, but many village patrons did, and as a result the issue was brought before the King of Meu (*rme'u rgyal po*), a regional authority who administrated the area. He is described as a Gelukpa who had no special interest in the case, but made a summary ruling that henceforth required households to choose monks from either one monastery or the other to perform household rituals—not both as had been the custom. This apparently created a more competitive and potentially divisive atmosphere that has persisted to the present day. Cech apparently learned of another source of enmity between these two institutions, namely, the propitiation of a protector deity at Nangzhi named Genyen (*sge snyan*) that was regarded as demonic by the Bonpos of Togden (Cech 1987, p. 88).

problems reportedly arose both from the protocol that was followed as well as from comments that were made. While oral accounts seem to vary slightly, they agree that the height of the thrones reserved for the two lamas was one source of offense; Shardza's was either slightly higher than, or else equal to, that of the erudite, degree-holding *geshé*. While this arrangement could perhaps be justified based on Shardza's regional reputation and his seniority, he lacked the *geshé*'s formal credentials. The seating arrangement and what it implied is said to have displeased Sherap Drakpa.

Once the ceremony had begun, one of my sources recounted that the two lamas politely deferred to one another regarding who should have the honor of speaking first. In the end it was Shardza who did so. He is said to have spoken very well, but according to one version of the story,⁶⁵ he concluded with an apparently innocuous remark that was misinterpreted by Sherap Drakpa. Attempting to enjoin his audience to assume a proper measure of responsibility for their own spiritual lives, he rhetorically asked something to the effect of, "after the teacher departs, who will remain to guide you?"

Sherap Drakpa understood this as a sleight. Given that the grammatical subject of the sentence can be elided in Tibetan, it is possible to think that Shardza was in fact saying, "After *I* depart, who here can guide you," implying that others, including the *geshé*, were incapable. When his turn came to speak, Sherap Drakpa was reportedly clear and articulate but also "spoke a little argumentatively," claiming that the dialectical tradition he represented was very important, and that focusing on a retreat-centered practice—for which Shardza was famous—might help an individual ("like a stone going up into the

⁶⁵ Personal interview with Geshe Nyima Dakpa in Dolanji, 2000.

sky"), but otherwise did little to help the religion.⁶⁶ Focusing on the value of supporting monasteries, training new generations of ordained monks, serving the needs of lay people and so forth, his sermon responded to a perceived offense by stressing the importance of his own Drasa training.

After returning home to the influential monastery of Yungdrung Ling, Sherap Drakpa began to criticize Shardza more openly. Over the years that followed, this initial antipathy grew to include supporters of both individuals who wrote many letters back and forth in polemical style. In fact, the teachers of both of the foremost leaders of the present-day Bön exile tradition, HH Lungtok Tenpé Nyima and Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak, were involved in writing such letters as part of this dispute.⁶⁷ While these letters appear lost to us now, the primary and enduring objection to Shardza voiced by Drasa authorities came to focus on his alleged 'mixing' of traditional Bön materials with 'New Bön'.

Looking Behind the Text

Attempting to discern additional layers of meaning beneath the surface of Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen's life-story, the present chapter has identified contextual factors of special relevance. In general, socio-religious and political circumstances fostered inter-sectarian tolerance and collaboration in eastern Tibet, while central Tibetan institutions promoted consolidation of religious authority. As a minority sect with limited economic resources or political influence, Bönpos in central Tibet adopted a religious and institutional program that largely mirrored those of their powerful Geluk neighbors, who were not

⁶⁶ Personal interview with HH Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima in Dolanji, 2000.

⁶⁷ HH Lungtok Tenpé Nyima's root teacher, Horwa Tenzin Lodrö Gyamtso (alias Aku Tonrampa, *a ku ston ram pa hor ba bstan 'dzin blo gros rgya mtsho*), along with Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak's root master, were both trained by the abbot of Yungdrung Ling, Khedrup Lungtok Gyatso (*mkhas grub lung rtogs rgya mtsho*).

above forcibly converting the *gompa* of 'heretical' rivals. The Bönpos' emphasis on celibate monasticism and scholastic training harmonized well with the conservative sensibilities of the central Tibetan Geluks, so that the Drasa monasteries naturally emerged as representative of a Bönpo orthodoxy. However, these institutions simultaneously remained dependant upon distant communities for their income, enrollments, and prestige.

This geographical difference between the location of leading Bön monasteries and their primary sources of patronage created the possibility for tensions to arise. While the central Tibetan climate favored a more restrained, formalized and intellectual approach to religion, both Buddhist and Bönpo communities in eastern Tibet sustained a broad diversity of religious specialists in a decentralized political environment. With the advent of the *rimé* movement in the nineteenth century, an extraordinary period of new revelations and new systemizations of doctrine and practice ensued in the east amidst unprecedented levels of inter-sectarian collaboration. Within the Bön lineage, differences of opinion on proper sectarian relations and boundaries find expression in the categories of New and Old Bön, which represent distinct responses to the New Treasure phenomenon, to the celebrated persona of Pema Chungné, and to innovations in ritual. For the orthodoxy in central Tibet, there was no question that the 'New' tradition represented a compromised, unsatisfying alternative.

These developments most decisively impact the biography of Shardza through the person of Sherap Drakpa, a representative of the central Tibetan Bön monasteries who pejoratively applied the label of 'New Bön' to Shardza, thereby threatening to undermine Shardza's status and that of his followers among Bönpo patrons and clergy. Oral accounts report that Shardza himself shed tears over these developments, deeply saddened by the

apparently divisive, intolerant attitudes expressed as well as by what he understood to be mischaracterizations of his own position.

Despite the real significance of these factors for Shardza's life and for the redactional milieu of his biographer, perhaps it should come as no surprise that this pivotal subject matter is hardly mentioned. In fact, in more than 350 folios of biographical material that was composed, there are scant references at best to any potential criticism he might have received. From a literary perspective, the absence of this material illustrates the degree to which religious biography is revealing not only for what it actively reports, but also for what it self-consciously omits. Given the genre's mandate and the author's stated concern to inspire readers, it is not surprising that sensitive topics and controversial episodes would be handled carefully, if at all. This is not to say, however, that Tenpé Gyaltzen's work does not actively seek to counter the potentially damaging indictments of his teacher with which he was all too familiar. Rather, Tenpé Gyaltzen's efforts to do so take place within the confines of his genre. To better grasp how he attempts to address this type of sensitive and revealing subject matter and accomplish his goals, let us turn now to his literary depiction and the alternative visions of Shardza he presents.

CHAPTER 2

A Life Takes Shape: Hagiography and the Making of a Tibetan Saint

Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen's religious life and career comes to us through the medium of two religious biographies: a relatively brief portrait named *The Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees* and a comprehensive portrayal entitled *The String of Wondrous Gems: A Necklace for the Wise Desiring Liberation*. Both were produced in eastern Tibet in the mid-twentieth century, yet they each represent an example of traditional Tibetan life-writing, or *namtar* (*rnam thar*), a significant class of Tibetan literature with a long history.⁶⁸ This vital genre, which exhibits historiographical traits and yet remains comparable in many ways to Christian hagiography, presents a reader with particular interpretive challenges. The present chapter will address these by bringing attention to the texts themselves, specifically examining the genre to which they belong, their authorship and audience, and their compositional qualities of structure and style.

Interpreting Tibetan Hagiography

Perceptions about this genre of Tibetan texts and the value associated with them have changed considerably in recent years. Contemporary scholarship in Tibetan Studies has shown a recent surge of interest in *namtar*—biographical accounts describing a protagonist's "full liberation"—in part because these texts represent such a considerable and distinct body of Tibetan writing. Indeed, it has been estimated that some two thousand such accounts have been written, along with another hundred and fifty examples of autobiography, a fact made all the more remarkable by the limited precedent

⁶⁸ As Janet Gyatso has noted, "Tibetans have been recollecting their lives in order to narrate them since close to the birth of Tibetan writing, [and] Tibetan literature is full of [both esoteric and] conventional accounts of experiences and careers (Gyatso 1998, p. 101)."

for such accounts in Indian literature.⁶⁹ These contemporary approaches to *namtar* are characterized by new appreciation for the potential value of these texts as well as for important hermeneutical issues involved in reading them.

While modern scholarship in Indian and Tibetan Studies has shown a recent surge of interest in biographical and hagiographical literature, prior generations of scholars often found this material a vexing resource. Rupert Snell comments that religious biographies in India "typically contain elements of the fantastic such as miracles and a variety of chronological implausibilities offensive to the historical basis of objective research principles," noting that as a result "such ostensibly 'biographical' writing has often... been dismissed out of hand as a tedious impediment to verifiable historiography."⁷⁰ Operating in what Jonathan Walters has called "historical source mode," early western historians of Buddhism, such as T.W. Rhys Davids, E. Lamotte, E.J. Thomas and A. Foucher, read early *suttas* that portrayed episodes from the Buddha's life as if these texts "were somehow trying to objectively report historical facts in a would-be nineteenth-century European way."⁷¹ In Tibetan Studies as well, historicist researchers of the last century have expressed frustration at the style and content of *namtar*. Janet Gyatso reports that the eminent Giuseppe Tucci resigned himself to surveying "hundreds of pages [of *namtar*] to find... an important piece of information."⁷²

⁶⁹ Gyatso points to *gāthā*, *doha* and *caryāgītī* (songs and esoteric poetry), which offer expressions of individual realization, as representing related genres that would eventually contribute to Tibetan life-writing, but finds no real textual traditions in India (or China, for that matter) that match the Tibetan fascination with this type of writing (cf. Gyatso 1998, p. 104, 114-116).

⁷⁰ Snell, in Callewaert, Winand M. and Rupert Snell, eds. 1994, p. 1.

⁷¹ Walters 1999, p. 259. Further describing this flawed approach, Walters outlines on p. 251 of the same article what he calls "the assumption of scholars in Rhys David's generation that the *suttas* provide us a transparent window into the events and ideas of the early Buddhist community and, by extension, the events and ideas of the Buddha's own life."

⁷² Gyatso 1998, p. 105, citing Tucci 1949, pp. 151-52.

A new orientation to the study of religious biography has emerged, however, one that brackets out the simple question of objective historicity and the distilling of 'fact' from 'fiction'. More contemporary researchers have recognized that, in the absence of corroborating evidence, there is no truly tenable way to establish a 'criterion of likelihood' from within the texts themselves that would allow an interpreter to separate the reliable from the incredible. As a result, scholars such as Granoff and Shinohara proposed modifying flawed searches for historical truth by exploring questions instead about 'traditional truth,' noting that the latter may be discernable as a shared 'narrative memory' when the sources agree.⁷³

While the category of 'traditional truth' represents both an interpretively sophisticated and a pragmatic response to the problems of religious biography, it would be less than honest to suggest that Tibetan religious biographies are no longer being read as sources for historical inquiry. In her analysis of the autobiographies of Jigmé Lingpa, Janet Gyatso argues that it is possible to 'mine' the exoteric version for useful data. She writes that "although we have but little corroboration of the details... it can be assumed that the many 'outer' events the text describes are largely factual, for they conform to what we do know of Jigmé Lingpa's life from other sources and reflect typical patterns of interaction in eighteenth-century Tibetan Buddhist society, all reported in the prosaic, chronicle-like fashion standard for this genre of writing."⁷⁴

Like other examples of hagiographic literature, Tibetan biographies or *namtar* may not attempt to offer an unbiased account of past events that meets the criteria of modern historiography, but it would be wrong to assume these texts demonstrated no concern for

⁷³ cf. Granoff and Shinohara 1988.

⁷⁴ Gyatso 1998, p. 124.

accuracy, detail and credibility in their reporting. In fact, past events may be recounted through one of several literary forms in Tibetan, which include a continuum of subgenres ranging from dramatic narratives to pedestrian chronicles.⁷⁵ Ostensibly historical documents and *namtar* significantly overlap in elements of both subject matter and style, so that Western observers have noted strong family resemblances linking *namtar* to other types of Tibetan historical literature.⁷⁶ Religious histories (*chos 'byung*), accounts of royal succession (*rgyal rabs*), annals (*deb ther*), monastic chronicles (*gdan rabs*), historical narratives (*lo rgyus*) and other similar types of texts all employ their own self-serving rhetorical strategies, differing from *namtar* perhaps more in degree than in kind. As we shall soon see, the author of Shardza's *namtar* speaks directly to question of accuracy and integrity in his representation, underscoring the fact that Tibetans themselves recognized clear parallels between *namtar* and other ways of writing history.

Scholars of Tibetan history and religion may therefore continue to construct the past on the basis of available documents like *namtar*, but the past envisioned has widened tremendously in scope. No longer seen as undependable sources of individual facts about a protagonist's life, Tibetan biographical texts are understood to encompass complex social, cultural, religious and literary worlds deserving of attention and productive of meaning in their own right. As Kurtis Schaeffer puts it, "The study of Buddhism as a localized, historical and social phenomenon in Tibetan cultural regions requires the use of works such as the life story of Örgyan Chökyi, for it is in such works that widespread practices and doctrines of Buddhism are expressed, appropriated, and contested in a local

⁷⁵ For good examples of the range of historical subgenres, see the Introduction to Dan Martin's *Tibetan Histories*.

⁷⁶ cf. Vostikov 1970.

setting."⁷⁷ In a similar way, recent scholarship has turned toward better understanding the 'redactional milieu' that inevitably shapes the production of a given work, recognizing that the biographical image that emerges is tied to and reflects particular circumstances and communities. Writing on early Buddhist *suttas*, Walters argues for "treating the texts themselves as actions within the sociohistorical circumstances of their production rather than as passive transmitters of neutral information."⁷⁸

As mentioned in the previous chapter, sectarian competition often appears as a key circumstantial factor motivating the production and distribution of religious biographies. Snell, for example, writes that "a prime purpose of hagiography is its deep vein of competition in which the superiority of one sect, tradition or lineage over another is strongly asserted,"⁷⁹ while Gyatso observes that "both autobiography and biography reflect the competitive climate of Tibetan sectarian politics."⁸⁰ In light of the controversy within the Bön tradition over Shardza's orthodox or heterodox status, the socio-political implications of the text require careful attention; there is little doubt that his disciple's biographical account represents one type of response to the situation. However, this aspect of the biography can only be approached and understood fully in light of the text's literary and religious dimensions.

The literary qualities of hagiography—marked by time-honored conventions, well-worn themes and protracted language—may have proven themselves an impediment for straightforward historical analysis, but they also open up opportunities for interpretation by drawing a reader's attention to the texts themselves. Achieving the resultant

⁷⁷ Schaeffer 2004, p. 49.

⁷⁸ Walters 1999, p. 283.

⁷⁹ Snell, in Callewaert, Winand M. and Rupert Snell, eds. 1994, p. 5.

⁸⁰ Gyatso 1998, p. 103.

hermeneutical distance is essential; as Richard Kieckhefer writes of medieval European hagiography, "it should be a truism that when we study the saints of the fourteenth or any other century that what we are in fact studying are not the saints themselves but the documents that claim to inform us about them."⁸¹

A literary perspective on hagiography thus begins by focusing on the nuances of the sources themselves and seeing them as richly textured objects of analysis in their own right—rather than as flatly transparent (or annoyingly opaque) windows one may gaze through (and look past) as one attempts to draw conclusions about their explicit subject matter. From this more critically distanced vantage point, one may then pause to reflect upon the religious ideals inscribed in the texts themselves and the circumstances that shaped their construction. As Kieckhefer explains, "the central question is not why the saints were as they appear in the sources; they may or may not have been so. The fruitful question is why their biographers represented them as they did—why they recognized certain traits and not others as integral to sanctity."⁸² Hagiographical texts, one might conclude, promise to reveal as much if not more about the biographer and his milieu—the community he represents and the audience he envisions—than they do about the saints themselves. In the present case, the material at hand offers a portrait of Tibetan sainthood from the sectarian and geographical margins of Tibetan society, in the last years before the upheaval of Chinese occupation. And as we shall see, the material affords a glimpse of how Tibetan religious ideology, historiography, and literary methodology have been artfully woven together.

⁸¹ Kieckhefer 1984, p. 3-4.

⁸² Kieckhefer 1984, p. 4.

Authorship, Audience and Publication

Contemporary theorists may have rightly warned against the fallacy of divining authorial intent, yet the author remains an obvious and an important locus for interpretation. The author's own background and position amidst the larger socio-religious climate, his relationship to his literary subject, and his stated aims all merit attention. In the present case, Shardza's life story has been portrayed in two works—a compact manuscript called *The Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees* and a lengthy tome entitled *The String of Wondrous Gems*—both authored by a single person, a disciple named Kelzang Tenpé Gyaltzen (*bskal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 1897-1959).⁸³ It is to a brief consideration of his circumstances and his vantage points that we now turn.

Tenpé Gyaltzen lived in the area of lower Nyarong in Kham and belonged to the Bönpo Köpung spiritual lineage within the Ra (*dpra*, pron. 'ra') clan. According to his own account, he met Shardza for the first time as an eight-year-old boy, and he later recalled that Shardza recommended religious education and training for him, offering encouraging remarks about his future potential.⁸⁴ Eventually Tenpé Gyaltzen would take Shardza as his primary teacher or 'root lama.' In *The String of Wondrous Gems*, Tenpé Gyaltzen underscored the meaning and strength of his relationship with Shardza in many ways, perhaps none more striking than his narration of dream experiences he had in his mid-twenties, through which he came to believe that Shardza had been his spiritual guide in former lives.⁸⁵

⁸³ The little that we know of Tenpé Gyaltzen's life mostly derives from a short preface to the modern, typeset edition of Shardza's abridged biography published in China.

⁸⁴ NBT 262.6-263.1.

⁸⁵ Tenpé Gyaltzen reports that this took place in the hermitage of Drimé Thanggyawa (*dri med thang bya ba*), during the female iron-bird year (1921), when he would have been in his mid-twenties (NBT 442.5ff.).

Over the course of his life, Tenpé Gyaltzen reportedly studied with a range of both Bön and Buddhist masters in eastern Tibet, including the Bönpo treasure-revealer Sangngak Lingpa and the non-partisan Gelukpa, Drakkar Losang Tenzin. He is said to have authored five published volumes of material on a breadth of subjects, but the preface to the recent Beijing edition of the *Pleasure Garden* describes these as having been "nearly lost".⁸⁶ He is further credited with "elevating the uncorrupted teachings of Shardza Rinpoche's Practice Lineage" by establishing a Bön practice community named Changchup Ling (*grub gnas byang chub gling*) in lower Nyarong, where he trained disciples from areas including Khyungpo, Amdo and Gyarong.

What little is known of Tenpé Gyaltzen demonstrates that his own career took place amidst the dynamic and liberal environment associated with *rimé* in Kham. He shared common liberal tendencies with his teacher Shardza, evident in the spiritual relationships he allegedly enjoyed with a diversity of people, including a revealer of New Treasure and a non-sectarian Buddhist mentioned above. He consistently employed the terms 'non-partisan' (*ris med*) and 'impartial' (*phyog med*) in a positive sense in his biographical writing, and he indicated that this broadmindedness is a virtuous quality commensurate with the aims of religion.

Tenpé Gyaltzen's progressive outlook forcefully manifested itself in the vehement rhetoric he utilized when discussing sectarian bias. Indeed, he often advocated ecumenicism as a counterpoint to the views of those whom he cast as orthodoxy's petty custodians. In an amusing anecdote that provides a particularly fitting illustration, he quotes at some length a Buddhist Nyingma *tulku* from the Hor region who apparently

⁸⁶ None of Tenpé Gyaltzen's works were available in Dolanji; however, Tsering Thar refers to two texts from a xylographic edition of his collected works, which suggests they have reappeared in Tibet (Thar 2000, p. 155, n. 389).

formed a favorable impression of Bön upon reading Shardza's Dzokchen writings.⁸⁷ Here Tenpé Gyaltzen dutifully described how this individual dismissed popular sectarian attitudes that view Bön and Buddhism as incompatible or 'mutually exclusive' (*'gal ba*), portraying these views as groundless and ill-conceived, if not blatantly idiotic.

In particular, the *tulku* is quoted likening the transmission of sectarian attitudes to a well-known Tibetan parable in which a foolish rabbit, alarmed by the sound of a stick falling into a river, spreads rumors of a calamity, needlessly frightening animals in the forest and creating a stampede. While this comparison primarily targets orthodox Buddhists who, despite little knowledge, have a tendency to denigrate and frighten their followers about Bön, the compliments the *tulku* then offered Shardza specifically set Shardza apart from partisan members of all traditions. Describing him as "a great scholar who has looked at non-sectarian (*ris med*) philosophical systems, new and old, only seeking the source of them in a straightforward manner," the *tulku* comments that Shardza did not suffer from "afflictive cravings to do the work of today's idiots, who seem to yearn for the 'crowns' that are their hats to be a certain color and the bowls of their fathers to be clean." This somewhat elliptical remark seems to suggest that other, unnamed religious figures are needlessly concerned with narrow distinctions—such as expressing childish preference for the hats that represent sectarian affiliation, overvaluing them as if they were crowns. It also implies that these same 'idiots' hold bigoted or small-minded views on the purity of their heritage—with their insistence upon the cleanliness of their fathers' bowls' probably illustrating an inability to admit any fault, however trifling, with their own religious lineage. In general, the comment suggests a

⁸⁷ NBT 433.6-434.5.

disproportionate emphasis on the details of sectarian protocol and the facade of inherited purity.

While this wry passage offers a general censure of sectarianism, especially in its most superficial expressions, elsewhere Tenpé Gyaltzen does more than hint at the problem of partisanship within Bön. At certain junctures in his biographical writing, the issues that arose from the Sherap Drakpa affair come to the fore in surprising moments of disclosure. On such occasions Tenpé Gyaltzen makes it clear that he was fully cognizant of the criticisms leveled against his teacher, and he deploys a rhetorical style in his writing that is more reminiscent of apologetics than hagiography. This is particularly evident when, after some five hundred folios of narrative in *The String of Wondrous Gems*, he defends his teacher's reputation and bluntly rejects the claims of Bönpo critics:

Nowadays, certain small-minded people push aside Shardza's treatises as New Bön (*bön gsar ma*), and they seem to be saying things like "he is a new lama" as the reason for this. Nevertheless, any reason claiming that the tradition of someone who is a new lama is therefore New Bön cannot be established. If there are a couple of people who are of another mind about this, by gradually engaging the treatises they will become certain [of their value]. So it occurs to me that there is no need to say a whole lot here or to resort to great effort [to argue the case]. The point here is that the treatises of Shardza are perfect commentaries on the intention of Old Bön (*bön rnying ma*).⁸⁸

These exceptional comments reveal clear links between the biographical project as a whole and the circumstances of history described in the previous chapter. The author's demonstrated need to defend his teacher's sufficiently orthodox status and to reject Shardza's designation as New Bön—let alone establish his saintly qualities—contributes

⁸⁸ NBT 503.4ff.

to the biographical image he created and the ideals of sanctity it reflects in ways that repay close attention. We shall return to explore Tenpé Gyaltzen's argument, and the supporting characterizations of Shardza he crafted, in subsequent chapters.

Of course, Tenpé Gyaltzen was not alone in his concern for preserving Shardza's memory and his reputation. His work naturally reflects values, memories, and priorities shared by others within his milieu. Discussing the composition of the *Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees*, Tenpé Gyaltzen explains: "When I was composing the verses as a short supplication to sustain my own faith, many assemblies of the faithful in the area and, in particular, the holy nephew of the lord [Shardza], Lodrö Gyatso (*blo gros rgya mtsho*), again and again urged me [to write the biography] with the flute of their [beautiful] voices. More recently, he who has come [to represent] the great Yangtön family lineage, the yogin of the snowy mountains, Tenzin Gyaltzen (*yang ston bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan*), and the holy nephew in the Khyung [clan], Yungdrung Dödul (*khyung dbon g.yung drung bdud 'dul*), reminded me [to do so] many times."⁸⁹

It may be only fitting for a hagiographer to deflect credit for his work, but there is no reason to doubt that a number of individuals provided a measure of encouragement and support for his literary project. Not surprisingly, most of those Tenpé Gyaltzen names as supporters were among the inner circle of Shardza's disciples and their followers and patrons.⁹⁰ And from the evidence available, it appears that the economic resources that financed publication came from eastern Tibet. In the case of the shorter and earlier work,

⁸⁹ PSTS 105-106.

⁹⁰ In the NBT 45.6ff, Tenpé Gyaltzen names close associates and disciples of Shardza as especially supportive, including Sangngak Lingpa (*sang sngags gling pa*), Tsultrim Tenpé Gyaltzen (*tshul khrims bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*), Yungdrung Puntsok (*g.yung drung phun tshogs*), Tenzin Rinchen Namgyal (*bstan 'dzin rin chen rnam rgyal*), Tenzin Wangpo (*bstan 'dzin dbang po*), Tsultrim Drimé (*tshul khrims dri med*) and others who urged him on.

The Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees, it was Shardza's nephew and formal successor, Lodrö Gyatso, who both urged completion and funded publication. While no publisher's colophon accompanies *The String of Wondrous Gems*, the evidence suggests that support was forthcoming from the same individuals, along with patrons of Shardza such as the ruling monarchs of remote eastern principalities.⁹¹

Despite this evidence of strong, local support for Tenpé Gyaltzen's biographical endeavor, even in the passage quoted above there are hints of an audience for the text well beyond eastern Tibet. Yangtön Tenzin Gyaltzen, for instance, was a disciple from an influential family lineage in the Dolpo region of western Nepal, a distant and remote area on the southwest border of the Tibetan cultural world that remains a significant site for Bönpo enclaves. In *The String of Wondrous Gems*, Tenpé Gyaltzen makes the surprising claim that Püntsok Lodrö, the Abbot of Menri in central Tibet, directly encouraged him to write Shardza's comprehensive biography. "When I was twenty-three and the majestic lama [Shardza] was sixty-five," he writes, "the great Abbot of glorious Menri and yogi of ultimate truth, Püntsok Lodrö, the mighty king himself, [said] that he had encountered the sacred writings of [Shardza]. With faith that they were created from Bön, he urged me [to write], saying that [Shardza's] hagiography needed to be widely disseminated."⁹²

These comments were reportedly made in 1920, a mere three years after the fateful encounter between Shardza and the central Tibetan *geshé*, Sherap Drakpa. As previously mentioned, Tenpé Gyaltzen would add that His Holiness Püntsok Lodrö was deeply impressed after making a detailed examination of Shardza's corpus in 1925, lauding it as

⁹¹ For example, Tenpé Gyaltzen was expressly encouraged to complete the larger biography by "the great patron of the majestic lama [Shardza's] teachings, the king Nyima Wangden (*nyi ma dbang ldan*) from the kingdom of Dragteng Chungngam (*brag steng khyung rngam*) in Gyarong (*rgya rong*)," accompanied by his court chaplain and royal treasurer (NBT 596-1-4.).

⁹² NBT 45.3ff.

fully consistent with traditional doctrine and authoring verses of praise for Shardza.⁹³ Tenpé Gyaltzen would thus have us believe that this major hierarch in central Tibet lent formal support to Shardza from this point forward. At the very least, it may be that His Holiness favored a conciliatory approach to the intra-sectarian tensions that had arisen, and oral sources have indicated that there were differences of opinion among the orthodoxy on the status of Shardza's work.

The growing availability of Shardza's collected works within the monastic institutions of central Tibet together with the controversy over his status adds up to a broad potential readership for Tenpé Gyaltzen's work. There is little doubt that a broad spectrum of Bönpos, including those associated with the Drasa, represented a vital if skeptical segment of Tenpé Gyaltzen's imagined audience. In crafting a portrait of his master, Tenpé Gyaltzen therefore charts a course between religious poles within the Bönpo world. In effect, he creates a double image. On the one hand, he continually affirms his master's faithfulness to the Menri tradition, quintessentially embodied by the 15th century founder and systematizer, Nyammé Sherap Gyaltzen; on the other, he celebrates the non-partisan orientation, visionary authorship, and compelling individual achievements that characterized the alternative religious ideals widely valued among the populations of eastern Tibet.

Stated Intent

Tenpé Gyaltzen's work was produced not only in response to key developments within his milieu, but also through an active and self-conscious process of literary construction. Indeed, Tenpé Gyaltzen was keenly aware of his role and status as a

⁹³ NBT 502.2ff.

biographer, and openly reflexive about the power and responsibility of his position.⁹⁴ Introducing his authorial task in *The String of Wondrous Gems*, he openly relates his perspective on the genre of *namtar* and outlines in detail what an ideal religious biography should be:

To elaborate on the nature of *namtar* from my own point of view: A person who possesses the realization of supreme emptiness, and the methods of immutable great bliss and universal compassion, respectively recounts mainly how [the protagonist] totally transcends the extremes of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, and how he possesses all kinds of secondary [virtues]. Thus it should serve as a contributing factor for uniting both direct disciples and those of the lineage with the path to complete liberation. And if this is the case, then in general it will present the subject's especially superior qualities of body, speech and mind relative to other ordinary persons. In particular, it will express how for his own welfare, the subject gained mastery over the truth (*bon*) of the path and its result, which are connected to the good qualities of realization and the three sets of precepts; and how, for the welfare of others, [the subject] acted for the tremendous benefit of disciples and the Conqueror's teaching, which is associated with the good qualities of the scriptures and canonical collections. A so-called *namtar* unfolds as a rosary of words that includes such things, connecting oneself and all others to the splendor of total liberation. From its power, faith and reverence will be increasingly elevated in the minds of disciples who hear and see the meaning of whatever is communicated, and as a result, disciples will become engaged even to the point of aspiring for this and that way to full liberation.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ As Frank Reynolds and Donald Capps put it, "That the sacred biographer is understood to confront such problems implies that he is quite self-conscious about the nature of his task and of the problems involved in the inclusion or omission of materials. Such self-consciousness may seem surprising.... Nonetheless, this kind of awareness is very apparent (Reynolds and Capps 1976, p. 3)."

⁹⁵ NBT 41.6-42.6.

This important passage offers a succinct capsule of statements on Tibetan hagiography, broaching issues from the hermeneutical to the thematic and functional. The first issue Tenpé Gyaltzen raises speaks to the question of who is in position to interpret the life of a saint. His answer—that the biographer ideally should be a realized being himself—points to an epistemological problem faced by ordinary observers of a saint's life. By uniting the enlightened qualities of wisdom and method, the ideal biographer relies upon his own spiritual acumen to appraise a saint's esoteric experiences and unconventional acts, dimensions of sanctity that might otherwise be easily misrecognized.

Of course, setting such an improbably high standard for good interpretation allows a biographer to adopt a humble demeanor with respect to his or her undertaking. Not unlike their Christian counterparts, Buddhist and Bönpo hagiographers sought to mitigate the self-assertiveness that accompanies authorship. Excessive conceit, arrogance or 'ego-clinging' was certainly unbecoming on the part of a Tibetan religious writer, though one may note that different genres (such as polemics) called for different rhetorical styles. Although hagiographic 'protestations of humility' are often dismissed in scholarship as so much pious convention—an essentially formulaic trope—recent research has also pointed out that the religious act of inscribing humility into the text allows an author to instantiate an admired religious ideal.⁹⁶ Disavowing any claim to realization himself, Tenpé Gyaltzen models a self-effacing demeanor, declaring his inadequacy in some early verses of the *Pleasure Garden*: "The good qualities of this person are profound and vast.// Although an undertaking such as this is not for one of inferior mind like me,// For

⁹⁶ Krueger 2004, pp. 97-102.

propagating a small, partial account of his momentous deeds to foster faith, // Who will disparage me?"⁹⁷

Tenpé Gyaltzen's poetry echoes his statement above on the inspirational function of *namtar*. A careful reader may have noted earlier that Tenpé Gyaltzen claimed to have originally written verses to foster his *own* faith—another modest gesture, in that he did not presume to edify others—though these verses would in fact become foundational for the *Pleasure Garden*. For Tenpé Gyaltzen, however, the ideal hagiography does more than stir feelings of faith and reverence in oneself or others. As he describes it, a sacred biography mediates between the individual and the ultimate, embodying the power to "connect oneself and all others to the splendor of total liberation." It also provides a spiritual roadmap filled with the 'this and that' of everyday religious life, the nuances and particulars of a saintly life the seeker is invited to imitate.

From a thematic standpoint, Tenpé Gyaltzen's discussion of hagiography makes explicit what aspects of a religious life or career are worthy of attention, elements that provided much of the structure for the *Pleasure Garden*. The breadth of virtues mentioned here range from esoteric personal achievements, such as "transcending *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* and mastering the truth of the path," to include tangible public service, illustrated in the preservation of precepts and canonical scriptures. Some of the attention devoted to the latter may be designed to satisfy conservative members of his readership; it is worth noting that Tenpé Gyaltzen names "both direct disciples and those of the lineage" among a *namtar*'s intended audience.

⁹⁷ PSTS 4.

Tenpé Gyaltzen's ideal hagiography also allows room for contrastive imagery, in which the saintly figure stands in high relief against a backdrop composed of inferior characters. These anonymous icons provide a literary mechanism for demonstrating the protagonist's "especially superior qualities of body, speech and mind relative to other ordinary persons," an approach that is partly evident in the author's inclusion of the *tulku*'s earlier remarks about "today's idiots." Elsewhere one finds similar statements that make consistent use of the Buddhist idiom of the 'degenerate age,' a notion marked by a generally pessimistic appraisal of human behavior (and sometimes potential) relative to earlier and better times. Set against this dark background, populated by charlatans and seedy caricatures—such as "drum-wielding town-wanderers" abusing religious ritual for personal gain—luminaries such as Shardza shine all the more brightly.

Tenpé Gyaltzen deployed a similar strategy, drawing upon the power of sharp contrast, to delineate suitable boundaries for his genre. Professing lofty standards for proper *namtar*, he established a frame of reference against which his work may be distinguished from that of unscrupulous others. Contrasting his vision of proper hagiography, he writes: "The opposite of this is an expression in pleasant words that includes such things as the story of [the protagonist's] 'resourcefulness' from the point of view of [the things of] this life, the dispensing and amassing of wealth and possessions, and how he did what just seems like virtue [but] is not in harmony with the scriptures and the stages of the path. Enlarged with embellishment, this mere method for creating titillation in worldly people may be storytelling, but apart from that, it is not to be counted as *namtar*."⁹⁸

⁹⁸ NBT 42.6-43.2.

Beyond demonstrating his own integrity as an author, Tenpé Gyaltzen's remarks here may be taken to show that the very existence of the hagiographies signifies his resolve to embody the ideals of a faithful disciple. Through the act of writing, he demonstrates the virtue of commitment to one's lama, expressly intending his endeavor to represent one of the 'three pleasing actions' one may perform for a teacher (*mnyes pa gsum*), in this case a gift of service. Adding that it is insufficient (and therefore inappropriate) to describe merely "how much food was given," Tenpé Gyaltzen disclosed above what a critical reader might well assume: he carefully weighed the religious subject matter, the literary style, and the amount of mundane information to be included—and *omitted*—from his own account. This would seem to invite and even require some 'reading between the lines' on the part of a hermeneutically suspicious interpreter, especially regarding events that might have appeared at all unsavory or discouraging. Sherap Drakpa, for example, finds no mention in either text, and frank discussion of controversial issues, such as Tenpé Gyaltzen's brief remarks on 'New Bön' cited earlier, is exceedingly rare. Typically one finds only oblique references to subject matter that would have been perceived as anything less than uplifting.

Nevertheless, if Tenpé Gyaltzen aimed to inspire by selecting appropriate subject matter, he also sought to establish his reliability as a resource. In fact, he took pains to distinguish his reporting as conscientious and free from hyperbole, consistently reassuring the reader that his account is accurate. Throughout the almost six hundred pages of his comprehensive edition, he repeatedly describes the specific nature of his sources for various narrative episodes, noting, for instance, whether an event or a comment he related was something he had perceived directly or whether it had been conveyed by Shardza himself, by a fellow disciple, or by people in a particular locality.

In the abridged text, at the end of a narrative describing wondrous signs appearing from Shardza's ritual relations with Tantric deities, he writes:

Although oral accounts of such things appeared copiously, a definitive record did not appear in writing. Yet I did not take the trouble of writing [this] as in the case of a blind-faith disciple [exaggerating to the point of] making his lama a fraud; [I did so] only as a way of creating faith in [Shardza's] good qualities of inner direct realization—the brilliant majesty that is a fitting testament to the stages of the path of Sūtra and Tantra—and in his divine visions and prophecies. Just this will have to suffice.⁹⁹

Tenpé Gyaltzen's disclaimer here—that his information was based on local oral history and not on anything textual—does more than underscore his conscientiousness. Together with his rather defensive tone, it suggests real misgivings about his perceived audience. Assuming a segment of his audience to be suspicious of his claims, he imagines that they may be reluctant to acknowledge the veracity of his evidence, a concern that likely shaped the very core of the biography. More likely than not, this segment is best represented by Shardza's clerical critics in central Tibet, accompanied by a few other more local educated elite who also would have been skeptical of esoterically-derived religious authority.

Orthodox clerics, however, do not represent the only challenging members of Tenpé Gyaltzen's audience. Elsewhere he portrays an alternate segment that is both untrustworthy and opportunistic. The presence of this element, which he describes as comprised of selfishly-motivated charlatans who "pose like a lion on the throne," convinced him to restrict his account to the outward dimension of Shardza's career.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ PSTS 83.

¹⁰⁰ NBT 500.5-502.2

Given the penchant for such people to establish claims to authority on the pretense of esoteric attainment, Tenpé Gyaltzen avoids much description of Shardza's significant mystical experiences.

This decision is especially noteworthy since Shardza himself, when prompted by close disciples to record a sketch of his life to accompany his treatises, provided a brief account that highlighted these very experiences. The author thus made a very conscious choice to produce a comprehensive exoteric or 'outer' biography (*phyi'i rnam thar*)—detailing the public dimension of Shardza's religious life—rather than an esoteric or 'inner' account (*nang ba'i rnam thar*). Moreover, his comments reveal that Tenpé Gyaltzen was likely less concerned with religious impostors than he was with showing solidarity with the same conservative clerics noted above, who were themselves typically unimpressed with such persons. Tenpé Gyaltzen puts it this way:

Because such [frauds] will come in many forms, I have made principle [how] Shardza fostered activities for the teachings and sentient beings, and there is no need to show extensively the particulars of the inner biographies. Even though I have depicted [some of them], it is not very necessary. It is certain that his heart-intention was to persuade others of the need to be followers of the life-example of such people as the master of the doctrine, the great Nyammé [Sherap Gyaltzen, the founder of Menri].

Avoiding a religious image dominated by esoteric individual revelations, which might have allied Shardza too closely with the New Treasure phenomenon, Tenpé Gyaltzen instead focused his work on the more conventional particulars of an exemplary religious career. In this way, the very structure of the work serves to align Shardza's career with that of his critics.

Structure and Style

To accomplish this and other aims, Tenpé Gyaltzen relies upon a long-established tradition of life-writing in Tibet, one marked by specific structural and stylistic patterns that themselves determine much about Shardza's depiction. Despite the fact that Shardza's two biographies were written by the same author, basic compositional elements vary markedly from one text to another, creating quite different literary portraits. A brief comparison and analysis of these most essential elements within the two texts is therefore in order.

Not surprisingly, both the 'brief' or 'condensed' (*mdor bsdus*) edition and the 'expanded' or 'comprehensive' (*rgyas pa*) biography share certain general organizational and stylistic features. Both, for instance, focus on the public, outer life of Shardza. Stylistically, both complement narrative passages with poetic verses that recapitulate the content of the prose in a pithy lyric style. According to Tenpé Gyaltzen's comments, the poetry for the condensed biography was penned first, so that in his initial composition—*The Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees*—he created and arranged the descriptive prose around the extant poetry. Stylistically both texts are also similar in their use of a eulogistic vocabulary, drawing upon the power of formal, honorific and at times prolix language. This elevated style, frequently characterized by Sanskrit literary conventions (especially in the poetic imagery), allows the author to proceed in commanding, magisterial fashion. A cursory glance at the translation that constitutes Part Two of this study should suffice to illustrate these tendencies.

On occasion, however, especially in the sprawling pages of *The String of Wondrous Gems*, a more unaffected and diffident style prevails, something Tenpé Gyaltzen consciously cultivates as well. Here a reader may detect an attempt to balance the literary concern to establish the writer's authority against a religious concern for modeling a non-

elitist, egalitarian ethos, a quality admired in the saint himself. Indeed, Tenpé Gyaltzen reported that Shardza's nephew and successor, Lodrö Gyatso, urged that his uncle's biography be "composed like the flow of water, principally in language that is easy to understand," so that it might then be of benefit to less capable disciples. Duly deferring, Tenpé Gyaltzen concludes this episode with verses indicating his compliance: "Relying on the pure seeds of the master's words// Clearly laying out just how things were in reality// I've recounted these anecdotes, unfettered by confusing expressions and verbal artifice// Through language like this, may [all others] obtain my good fortune."¹⁰¹ While his poetic flourish may not provide the best evidence for his claims here, the simplicity and familiarity he seeks is apparent at times, especially in recorded dialogue and his rather straightforward chronicling of ordinary events.

From a structural standpoint, the two biographies differ not only in length—the *Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees* consists of seventy-two folios while *The String of Wondrous Gems* contains a full 298—but also in their organizing principles. However, they also share certain basic structural features, elements that provide the most distinctively Tibetan framework for understanding an exemplary life. For example, the basic literary architecture in *The String of Wondrous Gems* presents Shardza's life via a three-fold scheme, consisting of: "a brief account concerned with what took place in his previous lives; a narration that comprehensively explores the expression of his realization in this very life and provides a particular account of how he was fully liberated; and a

¹⁰¹ NBT 46.4-47.1

brief conclusion explaining what occurred after his passing."¹⁰² In a similar way, Tenpé Gyaltzen lays out the outermost boundaries of the abridged *Pleasure Garden*:

I will give a little description that is true to life, avoiding exaggeration, which will include two parts: 1) a narration of the biography in order to demonstrate [Shardza's] good qualities; and 2) a prayer for the purpose of fulfilling people's needs, aims and wishes. The first part will include three further sections: 1) A short biographical sketch from the perspective of the Ground of his emanation; 2) A comprehensive biographical presentation of the events of this life; and 3) A brief conclusion with an explanation of what occurred after his passing.¹⁰³

The reader will notice that neither text opens its account with a starting point familiar to Western readers—Shardza's entry into the physical world as a newborn in 1859. This is because, for Tibetans, the journey of an individual life does not begin at birth or conception. Since the identity of each person depends upon a vast network of causality and interconnection spanning innumerable previous lives, there is no real starting point that can be defined in anything approaching strictly 'historical' terms—especially in the case of a holy being. Thus, both biographies begin their appraisal of Shardza's life from a macrocosmic perspective, one that frames his individual subjectivity and personal agency according to important theological assumptions.

In general, Bönpo writers are no different from other Tibetan Buddhists insofar as their religious worldview includes assumptions not only about reincarnation but also about the nature of complete enlightenment or Buddhahood. In the case of Shardza's life, Tenpé Gyaltzen's account refers to conceptions about ultimate reality consistent with distinctively Dzokchen understandings, which are generally analogous to those found in

¹⁰² NBT 13.3-13.4.

¹⁰³ PSTS 4-5.

Nyingma sources. Both editions of Shardza's biography thus frame the present life of the protagonist in terms of his previous lives as an eminent religious figure, each accentuating his ability, as an essentially realized being, to manifest or 'emanate' (*'phrul*) from the primordial Ground (*gzhi*) in a particular manner for the welfare of living beings. *The Pleasure Garden* puts it this way:

This holy and majestic one, whose primordial wisdom was aware in the original expanse—the basis of definitive reality—was free from the fetters of dualistic grasping. [6] Having perfected all the good qualities associated with renunciation [of faults] and realization [of virtues], he awakened [to a state] not different from that of the All-Pervasive Lord, the Primordial Master. He remained at one with all the Victorious Ones of the three times and their intention, in a state which neither combined nor separated body and primordial wisdom. Thus he became a source for the boundless diffusion of diverse, ocean-like multitudes of bodies and Pure Lands as well as of enlightened activities which trained anyone in whatever way was appropriate.¹⁰⁴

While one text specifically names previous lives and the other the 'Ground of emanation,' the overarching narrative edifice erected in both biographies establishes the protagonist's sanctity from the very beginning. Shardza's former lives, like those Buddhist tradition ascribes to the Buddha Shakyamuni, left him poised to fully express enlightened qualities that were already deeply ingrained. As Tenpé Gyaltzen explains, "A long time ago this holy, noble lama produced the thought of supreme enlightenment (*bodhicitta*), and he then amassed the accumulations [of merit and wisdom] and purified his obscurations. Achieving the exalted status of a Buddha, he dwelt as a great being who

¹⁰⁴ PSTS 5-6.

had acquired the power for spreading enlightened activity capable of training anyone in whatever way is appropriate, [which he did] for the sake of disciples."¹⁰⁵

Of course, this type of assertion sets up an interesting point of tension in his portrayal. If Shardza has been enlightened from the very outset, Tenpé Gyaltzen must reconcile his portrayal of Shardza's original purity (*ka dag*) and natural perfection (*lhun grub*) with the notable progress he makes over the course of time in various aspects of his religious life. On this issue Tenpé Gyaltzen, like other Tibetan biographers, decidedly accentuates the 'divine' rather than the human elements of his subject. In this most fundamental of structural layers of the text, at this initial, introductory stage, the author attempts to eliminate any semblance of doubt about his teacher's saintliness. As a result of his previous attainments, Shardza has virtually no soteriological needs—certainly none for a gradual, deliberate path to enlightenment.

Following a logic familiar from other Tibetan and Mahāyāna Buddhist contexts, Tenpé Gyaltzen resolves this tension by interpreting apparent struggle and progress as an illustration of the saint's compassionate skillful means. Like an actor on stage, the protagonist of the story is playfully engaged in a miraculous show, a production that he undertakes for the welfare of sentient beings. Alluding to well-known philosophical discourse on the ultimately empty, illusory nature of phenomena, the deeds of the great saint are similarly to be understood not to exist in the way they might appear. As Tenpé Gyaltzen puts it, Shardza "arose in the aspect of a spiritual teacher of the Supreme

¹⁰⁵ PSTS 5.

Vehicle for the sake of supporting disciples," merely "displaying the form of a monk endowed with the three [vows] in these degenerate times."¹⁰⁶

While the theology operative here is never fully spelled out, the portrait clearly affirms the biographer's intellectual commitment to a distinctively Dzokchen perspective on the dynamics of liberation and compassionate action. This is aptly depicted in the *Pleasure Garden*:

Without wavering from within the state of the Reality Body—the Ground's Expanse—the compassionate teacher Shenlha Ökar (*gshen lha od dkar*) rose up in bodily form in the miraculous display (*rnam rol*) of the Enjoyment Body from the natural luminosity which radiated within the cognizant aspect of primordial wisdom—the Ground's Manifestation (*gzhi snang*)—and he acted for the welfare of extraordinary disciples. From there, for the sake of ordinary disciples, [he acted] in accord with what it says in Sūtra: "Relying on skillful methods and compassion, he appeared everywhere for the benefit of beings." In this way did [Shardza] generally display himself in the manner of [figures] such as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in accord with disciples' devoted aspirations, in order to train anyone in whatever way was appropriate. Taking infinite births as beings both pure and impure, he accomplished his disciples' welfare. Therefore, the way that this was done is inconceivable, and cannot be stated definitively or ascertained in just one way.¹⁰⁷

The embedded Dzokchen worldview thus dramatically frames the pedestrian features of a life, and challenges the reader to look for understanding beyond ordinary conceptual possibilities. Underscoring his teacher's ultimate, inconceivable status, ordinary modes of knowing prove insufficient for recognizing the potentiality of the enlightened state. For

¹⁰⁶ PSTS 12-13.

¹⁰⁷ PSTS 6-7.

instance, in one discussion of his wondrous, unimaginable nature, Shardza reputedly represents both a 'supreme emanation' (*mchog gi sprul pa*) of the famous ninth-century Bönpo master, Drenpa Namkha, as well as a 'playful aspect' (*rnam rol*) of Drenpa Namkha's son, the realized yogin Tsewang Rinzin. Tenpé Gyaltzen glosses what would seem to be a logically impossible claim—that Shardza could somehow represent an aspect both of both father and son—first by referring to scriptural accounts of three-fold 'body, speech and mind' emanations attributed to the legendary Drenpa Namkha; and second, by reminding his readers that "the miraculous manifestations of those who act for the welfare of the difficult-to-train are tremendously vast."¹⁰⁸

Tenpé Gyaltzen's account of Shardza's former lives functions on multiple levels, also effectively weaving together an astonishing network of persons, places and times, drawing upon a surprising array of religious authorities. The figures that are strikingly juxtaposed here in the structural foreground of both texts deserve brief attention here, for they represent what can only be seen as the author's first bold statement of non-partisanship.

The process commences by connecting Shardza to the very founder of Bön himself, Tönpa Shenrap, in whose retinue he dwelt as a bodhisattva and a pure monk in the legendary Bönpo realm of Olmo Lungring. Perhaps an assertive if not unpredictable claim, it is followed by a lifetime with Tönpa Shenrap's spiritual heir, Muchok Demdruk. Quickly, however, the account provided by the treasure-revealer Sangngak Lingpa shifts from these revered Bönpo personages to ancient India. Here we discover that Shardza

¹⁰⁸ PSTS 10. It appears from Tenpé Gyaltzen's comments that emanations (*sprul*) may be more restricted in number (to three for example), whereas what I'm calling 'miraculous manifestations' (*rnam rol*) may be limitless in number.

next sat at the feet of the Buddha Shakyamuni, and as no less than his cherished disciple Ananda.

The recounting of these three lives alone situates Shardza at the center of both Bön and Buddhist lineages from their very beginnings, an arresting pattern that continues to unfold in his subsequent births. He is next described as an early follower of the trio of Drenpa Namkha and his sons—pivotal figures for many traditional Bönpos and certainly for the supporters of New Bön. A renowned scholar and translator in the early diffusion of Bön, Shardza here manifested the vaunted qualities of learning and erudition. Immediately thereafter, however, Shardza is next identified as a highly-influential treasure-revealer who straddled sectarian lines: he is none other than Ngödrub Drakpa, here credited with revealing two important Bön Dzokchen texts as well as the famous Buddhist treasure, the *Mani Kabum*, which he transmitted to the Nyingmapa figure Nyangral Nyima Özer.¹⁰⁹

These significant signs of persistent karmic history at the heart of both Bön and Buddhist tradition enable Tenpé Gyaltzen to foreshadow key features of his work. The introductory scene-setting provided by Shardza's past lives establishes a motif of intra-sectarian compatibility one can expect to see carried through the events of the present incarnation. Of course, these seemingly audacious proclamations of Sangngak Lingpa, repeated by Tenpé Gyaltzen, attest to their own non-sectarian, *rimé* outlooks. Finally, the more recent lifetimes presented, in which Shardza lived as more obscure persons of regional renown, presage his religious activity in certain localities (such as Gyarong) and his penchant for retreat and Dzokchen meditation.

¹⁰⁹ The Bön Dzogchen texts in question are the *rdzogs chen bsgags pa skor gsum* and the *yang rtse klong chen*. cf. NBT 29.3-30.1.

Returning to the structural features of Gyaltsen's biographies, one finds that although they have coincided quite well thus far, what lies between the outermost layers of the two texts diverges dramatically. Whereas *The String of Wondrous Gems* largely consists of a core diachronic narrative that offers a year-by-year account of significant events in Shardza's life, *The Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees* employs a highly-structured series of thematic divisions that group together key events in telling hagiographical rubrics. This latter approach effectively maps out the keys to an exemplary life, marshalling evidence from various episodes throughout Shardza's life to demonstrate that his existence indeed measured up to a saintly standard. The comprehensive edition, in contrast, proceeds via a more detailed year-by-year account, in which various events of each year are interspersed with occasional authorial commentary. The information that is communicated about Shardza's travels and encounters, teachings given and received, contemplative experiences and so forth, is thereby presented in a way which foregrounds the life events themselves, allowing the saintly representation to arise from within the flow of the narrative.

The *String of Wondrous Gems* thus approaches the present life of Shardza through a basic three-fold chronology. Straightforwardly beginning with Shardza's youth (*sku gzhon dus*) and continuing to explore his adult life (*sku tshe'i stod*, 'the upper [or nascent part] of his life'), this primary segment duly concludes with an account of his later years (*sku tshe smad*, 'the lower [or latter part] of his life'). The three sections are respectively linked to "the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] he received and contemplated"; "the meditations and practices he brought into his experience"; and "the explanations [or scholarship] and practices [that constituted his turning] the wheel of [enlightened] activity." In all three sections, the text proceeds with an annual chronicle of events in Shardza's life, in which each year is introduced and set off from the previous

year and each annual segment is concluded with poetic verses highlighting the particular events discussed and the virtues illustrated.

By contrast, the abridged *Pleasure Garden's* presentation of the events of Shardza's life includes key subdivisions that are absent from the larger work. After initially presenting some prophetic foreshadowing of his remarkable existence (found in both works), the text subdivides its account of his present life via the triad of 'outer, inner and secret', with the main body of the text almost entirely consisting of Shardza's outer, most public, biography. This outer biography is then explored by means of eight distinct thematic categories, which serve as the single most dominant organizational feature of the text. These central themes are arranged as follows:

The first, [his outer biography,] consists of two parts: the explicit [narrative] and a synopsis of its significance. The first [of these two, the explicit narrative,] will be further elaborated in eight [parts, namely:] 1) how he took birth as a human being; 2) how he awakened the dynamic energy of awareness (*rig pa*) and directly traversed the grounds and paths in leaps and bounds; 3) how, reflecting upon the welfare of the teachings, he engaged the path in gradual steps; 4) how he received the nectar of the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] from tremendous spiritual masters; 5) how he then made his mark in meditation practice in solitary places; 6) how, depending on that [practice], he acted for the welfare of the teachings and sentient beings; 7) how, in particular, the work associated with the teachings he left behind was promulgated; and 8) additionally, I will describe his other good qualities, which are immense.¹¹⁰

These divisions are most noteworthy for revealing in clear terms what aspects of an individual's life history Tenpé Gyaltzen believes the biographical enterprise is meant to

¹¹⁰ PSTS 17.

address. Naturally, when taken together these activities add up to sainthood. By focusing select attention on this set of key events and activities throughout his narrative, Tenpé Gyaltzen repeatedly emphasizes that the life in question is the life of a saint. Authors such as Reynolds and Capps have observed this phenomenon in religious biography more generally, claiming that focusing on major event-categories in the life of a religious figure helps to create or reinforce an idealized saintly image. As they explain, "The sacred biographer is not primarily concerned to provide a narrative portrait or 'likeness' of the subject. Establishing the mythical ideal, or what might better be called the biographic image, takes precedence over a simple chronicling of biographical facts. Very often this biographic image is established by directing attention to a few key events in the life of the subject including, in most cases, his birth, his religious quest and its denouement, and his death."¹¹¹ At the same time, the literary movement toward an idealized, well-defined model tends to strip away individual expression, leaving the biographer to navigate between the dual tasks of showing saintly conformity while also conveying unique human personality.

It is impossible to say with certainty why Tenpé Gyaltzen includes this important structural feature in one version of his work but not in the other, but it makes for a very tangible difference between the two. The abridged *Pleasure Garden* overtly structures itself around categories that establish Shardza as an ideal religious figure, while *The String of Wondrous Gems* provides something much closer to a simple, if selective, chronicling of biographical data.

¹¹¹ Reynolds and Capps 1976, p. {}.

Given that the former was written first, it is likely that Tenpé Gyaltzen saw the latter more as a complement than an expansion of his initial work. By virtue of its structure as well as its length, it made greater allowance for individuating subtleties and precise historiographical recounting, adding new depth for an audience already equipped with a skeletal map of Shardza's saintliness. In relation to the *Pleasure Garden*, the *String of Wondrous Gems* may be mined for evidence to support the claims explicitly laid out in the earlier edition. As such, it deploys a simpler literary style, primarily undertaking a consistent, inexorable temporal march through the prosaic details of a full life. In the final analysis, the two are ultimately very different types of texts. However, they each strive to convey a depiction of Shardza's life that twentieth century Bönpos, regardless of their circumstantial differences, might find both inspiring and credible.

CHAPTER 3

Genesis: Birth, Discipleship and Precepts

Shardza's biographies offer vital images and perspectives on an extensive array of literary, social, historical and religious phenomena, all within a vibrant localized setting. The image of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen presented here and in the following chapters represents a composite sketch, a new portrait that draws upon the saintly themes of *The Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees* as well as the detailed chronicles of *The String of Wondrous Gems*. As we begin an exploration of the content of these works, the present chapter asks questions about the type of socio-economic and religious community Shardza represents, the types of religious power and authority he encounters and slowly acquires, and the degree to which his depicted life both conforms to and subtly reforms saintly ideals. In the process, it also provides the first in-depth look at the life and religious career of a modern, influential member of the Bön tradition. The analysis here centers upon Shardza's birth and early circumstances, his relationship with his primary teacher, and his assumption of religious precepts.

Early Circumstances: Birth, Family and Childhood

Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen was born in a rural, mountainous area located between the four river valleys that converge in the southeast of Tibet in the province of Kham, and the epithet "Shardza" refers to his birthplace, the eastern (*shar*) part of the area known as Dzakhog (*rdza khog*). His biographer quotes from a document in the abridged biography that he describes only as "a beautiful text" depicting the area of his teacher's birth:

It was in the eastern part of the Land of Snow, the country of Tibet, in the great region of Dokhammé (*mdo khams smad*, the lower or southern part of

eastern Tibet), in the eastern part of Nguldza Zalmo Gang (*ngul rdza zal mo sgang*), in the mountain range of Dagang Ringmo (*zla sgang ring mo*).¹¹² Many, many learned and accomplished beings came [there], and this blessed region was called Dzakhog. [It was located] in between the gently flowing rivers of Dzachu (*rdza chu*) and Dachu (*brda chu*, *bsda chu*), in the vicinity of the power place for meditation practice known as Yungdrung Lhunpo (*g.yung drung lhun po*) [mountain, an area] which was protected by the three [mountain ranges] of Gyer, Za and Che (*gyer za mched*). [Here], on the side of the mountain range called Da was a village that was [to become] his locus of activity.¹¹³

The spiritual significance of this locale is expressed by the comprehensive biography's full accounting of the power places (*gnas*), holy personages and famous lineages associated with the area.¹¹⁴ The foremost of power places in the region, Yungdrung Lhunpo (*g.yung drung lhun po*), is described as "one of twenty-five sacred places in Dokham," blessed by emanations of the divine triad of Drenpa Yabsé Sum, who acted here to suppress evil serpent deities (*klu*), bind them to oaths and seal the location with physical signs of divine presence. Best understood not as an independent center, this sacred mountain locale is presented as one nexus among a much broader network of sacred geographical sites both local and regional. Typical of such sites, its significance is linked to the prophecies of high Tantric lamas, old traditions of local soul-mountains and

¹¹² *ngul rdza zal mo sgang*. NBT gives *ngul chu zal mo sgangs*. This refers to one of the six hills or ridges located between the four rivers which flow down through eastern Tibet, included in the topographical classification known as 'four rivers, six ridges' (*chu bzhi sgang drug*). The rivers referred to are the 'bri chu, rma chu, rgyal mo ngul chu and zla chu., while the six ridges are the *zal mo sgang*, *tsha ba sgang*, *smar khams sgang*, *spo 'bor sgang*, *dmar rdza sgang*, and *mi nyag rab sgang ste sgang* (TDCM 808). Here the text refers to *zal mo sgang*. The specific mountain range identified in this area can be found with alternative spellings; the NBT spells this as *bsda sgang ring mo*, while one local informant wrote *sda sgang ring mo*.

¹¹³ PSTS 18.

¹¹⁴ NBT 53.1ff.

lakes, ongoing revelations of religious treasure, and continuing stewardship by numerous heirs of respected family lineages and famous lines of incarnation.

Such claims notwithstanding, this rural locale was situated far from the regional center of Degé (*sde ge*), not to mention the relatively urban areas of central Tibet, and it remains a remote one even today. Dzakhog's pastoral environment thus contributes to a picture of humble beginnings, an image reinforced by his family's apparently modest social and economic status. Commenting that it is especially challenging to take up the religious life if one is "too rich or too poor," Shardza reported that he was born "between these extremes," and that "it was fortunate [I] could encounter the teaching that way."¹¹⁵

Even as an accomplished teacher, Shardza seems to have regarded himself as an unsophisticated rustic who was never fully conversant with the protocols of elite society. During a period of mid-career travel to the royal houses of ruling monarchs in eastern Tibet, Shardza reportedly stated: "From when I was small, I've stayed in the style of a humble renouncer. In the presence of different kinds of important people, whatever respectful gestures and things I do aren't enough. Most people look at me as if I'm proud. It is very difficult for me to [follow] the customs and such of royalty."¹¹⁶

A critical reader might wonder whether Shardza or his biographer strategically downplayed any level of social sophistication; after all, such qualities did not likely represent the most cherished among those possessed by religious elite. In fact, another type of very tangible prestige, perhaps more widely appreciated, was reserved for the figure of the accomplished hermit free from worldly concerns, and this is the type of authority and stature ascribed to Shardza. Nevertheless, no evidence indicates that the

¹¹⁵ NBT 64.2-3.

¹¹⁶ NBT 300.1ff.

modest characterization of Shardza's background was inconsistent with what is known of his family circumstances, which do not appear to have been especially remarkable.

Tenpé Gyaltsen's account of Shardza's family lineage, in fact, succeeds mainly in showing that his parents were upstanding, moral individuals with Bönpo ancestry. Although he cites a proverb asserting the importance of heritage ("a person who doesn't know his caste (*rigs*) is like a monkey in the forest's dark depths"), his account of Shardza's parentage offers no links to any ancient or renowned Bön family lineages. Nor was Shardza ever recognized as a reincarnate lama or *tulku* (*sprul sku*). Instead, one reads simply that Shardza's father, Tashi Ga (*bkra shis dga'*), descended from a lineage originating with the Hor tribes (given as *thugs kar bu dbu'i rgyud* and identified as one of six distinct Hor lineages), that he came from an unbroken lineage of Bönpos, and that he was virtuous, broadminded and capable. No information is given about Shardza's maternal lineage; his mother, known as Bolek or Bolek Jawa (*bo legs bya ba*), is briefly described as steady, gentle, kind, helpful, free from "faults associated with women," and endowed with the qualities of a wisdom goddess.

The absence of any type of family connections, crucial in the lives of many important religious figures, may be the most notable aspect of Shardza's early circumstances. There is no doubt that Tenpé Gyaltsen would have lauded the virtues of Shardza's ancestry were it at all remarkable. Nor is any mention made of other family members who might have previously pursued a religious career. For example, Shardza's nephew, Lodrö Gyaltsen (*blo gros rgyal mtshan*, 1915-1952) would later train with his uncle and eventually propagate Shardza's spiritual lineage—an extremely common practice in Tibetan religious transmission—but it appears there were no spiritually influential relatives to play a role in the life of the young Shardza.

Of course, Tenpé Gyaltzen understands and presents his teacher's birth as a truly momentous occasion. Representing the culmination of prophetic predictions and a host of important previous lives, Shardza's birth that attest to his benevolent intent and his power to assume human form for the welfare of living beings.¹¹⁷ *The String of Wondrous Gems* describes how Shardza discerned beforehand that his parents would be suitable, and how his mother noted a number of especially powerful dreams and auspicious signs during her pregnancy, including a feeling of inexpressible joy and a virtuous mind unlike anything she had previously experienced.¹¹⁸ In an interesting aside, the author reveals that he did not personally obtain the account of auspicious signs that arose in connection with Shardza's birth; he instead explains how the people of the area, who were "like relatives in harmony" and who "spent their lives there together" were reporting such things.¹¹⁹ These comments provide one good example of how Tenpé Gyaltzen made deliberate effort to persuade a potentially critical segment of his audience that his reporting was both careful and credible.

According to these reports, Shardza entered the world in the earth-female sheep year of the fourteenth historical cycle (1859), on the eighth day of the third month of the Tibetan calendar. He was given the name Namgyal Tseten (*rnam rgyal tshe brtan*), and spent perhaps a year or two in his birthplace before a period of unrest destabilized the region. His family then fled the area when he was a toddler during the violent reign of the infamous Nyakgön Gyalpo (*nyag mgon rgyal po*), which was marked by armed conflict

¹¹⁷ PSTS (p. 14) parses a prediction that is understood to auger Shardza's birth from a text called the *Sipa Gyügyi Khachang* (*srid pa rgyud gyi kha byang*), a treasure text of a certain Khöpung Lodrö Tokmé Tsal (*khod spungs blo gros thogs med rtsal*). The information on Shardza's previous lives derived from the 'wisdom vision' (*ye shes kyi gzigs pa*) or visionary knowing of Sangngag Lingpa (NBT 24.4).

¹¹⁸ NBT 57.4ff.

¹¹⁹ NBT 58.1-3.

leading to the destruction of the "upper and lower" country of Dza. At this point his parents fled to a place called Gola Ten (*sgo la sten*) in lower Hor. Once the fighting came to an end they returned to their native land, which appears to have occurred within a year or two.¹²⁰ Tenpé Gyaltzen's brief recollection of this episode underscores the unsettled political climate of Kham during this period, which as noted previously involved decentralized power and the opportunity for local and regional entities to exert influence, at times violently. Amidst an environment that was neither free from uncertainty nor subject to tight control, Shardza appears during his early years to have neither endured great trauma nor enjoyed great privilege. On the whole, regional instabilities did not significantly impact Shardza or his family following this one notable episode. Within a few years of returning home, Shardza obtained his parents' permission and was free to take up religious pursuits at a local Bön monastery without impediment. Here he began to show his promise as a student and eventually, a teacher.

Naturally, the subject of Shardza's entry into the religious life figured prominently in both of Tenpé Gyaltzen's accounts. In hagiography, the childhood of a saint is typically interpreted only from the retrospective standpoint of his later religious career. In other words, childhood events recounted in hagiographies will generally be selected (or perhaps invented) for inclusion in the narrative so as to presage the religious qualities valued in later life. That is to say, Shardza's childhood, remembered by villagers and reported by disciples, very much remains one that holds meaning in relationship to his later public achievements as both a prolific scholar and a renowned contemplative.

¹²⁰ NBT 59.6-60.1.

This narrative device sets the scene in a particular way, creating an expectation in the audience that will later find natural fulfillment. Nevertheless, in comparing how the two biographies present Shardza's childhood personality, one finds some notable differences. While both texts describe traits that establish the young boy's religious predispositions, the abridged, thematic *Pleasure Garden* presents these qualities in highly idealized terms and in summary fashion:

As for the qualities of holy beings: Because they are never separated from the natural radiance of the good qualities with which they are well-acquainted, there were good signs and indications from the moment [Shardza] was born. On a number of occasions when he was growing up, great religious purity, faith and the expression of compassion were evident in his gentle spirit (*rgyud*). His mind was exceedingly sharp, he had a graceful deportment, and all of what he did with his physical form was applied to activities only of the highest order. Because of his very strong predisposition to rejoice in good qualities from the time of his childhood, he took unusual delight in holding sacred objects and in wearing the attire of a monk, and, assuming the form of a lama, his only play consisted of giving empowerments and explaining the doctrine (*bon*). He also had many kinds of visions and prophecies, saying how he saw this divine form in the sky in such a way, and [from these beings] came words in such a manner.¹²¹

Based solely on this account, it may be tempting to imagine that the author lacked detailed information about Shardza's childhood and therefore filled in gaps with stock phrases and standard imagery. However, Tenpé Gyaltzen's comprehensive account presents anecdotes that counter the depersonalizing tendencies illustrated in the passage above, conveying a clearer sense of individuality and creating a more nuanced portrait.

¹²¹ PSTS 19.

For example, it reports that Shardza's parents nicknamed him 'Nyopbé', meaning 'lazy' or 'easy-going', a quality illustrated by an early penchant for neglecting to clean or care for his bowl and eating utensils.¹²²

Humorous vignettes like this one do more than communicate a sense of personality; they also merit inclusion because they illustrate appropriate religious temperaments or foreshadow essential qualities. In the case above, Shardza's indifference suggests an appropriate demeanor for someone who would later renounce worldly affairs, a point the text itself reiterates. Along the same vein, we are told that Shardza kept apart from other children and enjoyed caves and pretending to meditate. To illustrate these esoteric proclivities, Tenpé Gyaltzen relates that at the age of three, Shardza had a nanny by the name of Achi Yungdrung Tso (*a phyi g.yung drung mtsho*); during the time Shardza was in her care he would wander off into the countryside and later tell her about seeing disembodied beings and hearing conversations among them. Many years later, the old nanny came to see Shardza while he was staying in a mountain retreat; in a humorous twist, she reminded the prestigious lama of what he saw as a child, expressing hope that these sorts of things were still happening.¹²³

Entering the Path

The latent predispositions for the religious life that emerge in the description of Shardza's birth and early childhood are similarly emphasized in his youth. This is especially evident in the account of Shardza's entry into the monastic life, when Tenpé Gyaltzen clearly establishes this process as one of irresistible vocation rather than

¹²² NBT 60.3-4.

¹²³ NBT 60.1-3; 60.5-61.2

personal preference, either on the part of Shardza or his parents. As *The Pleasure Garden* explains:

At the time [Shardza] reached nine years of age, the Lord of Yogins and member of the Ra (*bdra*) clan, the great Siddha Tenzin Wanggyal (or Drenpa Dūdul) spoke directly in this way to [Shardza's] parents: [20] "This son of yours needs to become a monk." When the flower of his words reached the crown of their heads, they replied, "He is our only son. Apart from him we have no others. So we can't [let him go]." Then, not long after, just like the divine admonition [warned], the magnificent [Shardza] all of a sudden became disturbed in the midst of [other] children and for many days he didn't eat. Because [these] conditions arose, again his parents went before Drupwang Rinpoche [alias Tenzin Wanggyal], asking for forgiveness and spiritual protection. He said to them, "This boy is a [person] with good karmic residuum, so if he doesn't enter the gateway of Bön, he will not be of use to you." There was no getting around these words, so they duly offered a supplication, anticipating that he would become a monk. When they came home at that point, the dementia also cleared up by itself and he spent many days with an air of contentment.

After his parents' permission was obtained, Shardza took ordinary refuge vows on an auspicious day at the age of nine, making prostrations and receiving ceremonial tonsure—literally "offering his head as a monk" (*grwa pa'i mgo 'bul zhus*). His teacher, Tenzin Wanggyal, often called Ratrul (*bdra sprul*, "the incarnate [teacher] of the Ra [clan]," or Razhig, "the Ra [clan] ascetic"), bestowed the refuge vows along with the name Tashi Gyaltzen (*bkra shis rgyal mtshan*), at which time he offered "a prayer from

his heart, saying 'may this boy become one who vastly benefits the teachings and sentient beings.'"¹²⁴

The disappearance of Shardza's illness was discerned by his teacher to be a favorable sign from the protector deities. One might note that both accounts here introduce the supporting role played by these deities, whose divine agency represents a guiding force behind the unfolding of karmically predestined events throughout the narrative. After bestowing refuge vows, Ratrul instructed the Tantric guardians in general and his own special protectress, Machik Kasang Lhamo (*ma cig bka' gsang lha mo*), in particular, to look after his spiritual son. According to contemporary Bönpos, the propitiation of this particular protectress continues amongst Shardza's disciples down to the present day. Tenpé Gyaltzen also comments here upon the role played by the ubiquitous Bönpo protectress Sipé Gyalmo (*srid pa'i rgyal mo*), who Shardza said appeared consistently in visionary dreams that were to occur throughout his life.

At the age of eleven, Shardza received the vows of celibacy (*tshang spyod*) and donned monastic robes. He participated in monastic assemblies and rituals and was generally respected, but, as Tenpé Gyaltzen writes in *The String of Wondrous Gems*, Shardza's close friends would later admit that "he was unable to do much for Bön" during this time.¹²⁵ However, our author reassures us that these same sources also confirmed that Shardza avoided activities that were in any way contrary to the religious life, such as trading, farming, household business and so on. He studied writing with a certain Nyitra (presumably a monk named Nyima Tashi, *nyi ma bkra shis*), and among those he encountered in the religious life, he showed special admiration for hermits (*ri khrod pa*).

¹²⁴ NBT 64.4ff.

¹²⁵ NBT 66.1.

He is also said to have aspired to emulate those he saw with the Tantric ritual accouterments of drum (*damaru*) and thigh-Böne trumpet (*rkang gling*).

Shardza began reading in earnest at the age of twelve. As Tenpé Gyaltzen puts it: "When [Shardza] was twelve years old, he learned to read from his uncle Yungdrung Gyaltzen (*g.yung drung rgyal tshan*). He was taught seven pages of text, and at that point knowledge came without difficulty."¹²⁶ Once again the portrayal demonstrates a certain degree of uncanny predisposition, echoing a theme prevalent in Tibetan hagiography—that of astonishing childhood literacy based upon previous karma. Tenpé Gyaltzen's account, while understated, nonetheless describes a facility for effortless learning that links Shardza to other eminent figures and foreshadows the scholarly dimension of his later career. We will return to explore this aspect of his life further in due course.

When Shardza was fourteen, his mother died. He experienced what Tenpé Gyaltzen calls "a direct understanding of impermanence," which likely contributed in the long term to his movement away from family life. In the immediate aftermath, however, he stayed with his father and "worked tirelessly" with him until such time as his father took a new wife, who would later bear a son and a daughter. The son, Shardza's half-brother Tsultrim Tenzin (*tshul khrims bstan 'dzin*), would eventually become a monk and a follower of Shardza, while the daughter, Tsewang Kyi (*tshe dbang skyid*), would remain at home, marry and later bear a son, Lodrö Gyatso, who would later become the primary heir to his uncle's spiritual lineage.

¹²⁶ PSTS 22.

Discipleship

The path leading to a religious career was opened up for the young Shardza by the locally respected lama, Ratrul Tenzin Wanggyal. As the only son of a family without a strong religious heritage, it is likely that social norms and economic pressures alone would have steered Shardza toward secular life. Had it not been for the lama's influence, Shardza's family might very well have resisted any expressions of religious inclination the boy might have shown. In fact, *The String of Wondrous Gems* reports that Shardza's disturbed psyche and lack of appetite manifested themselves only after all the children of the village were invited to become monks; while thirty of his peers actually did so, he was initially denied permission by his parents.

But once Shardza's religious inclinations were acknowledged and his parents' permission secured, what kind of training would Shardza, a young Bönpo in rural Kham, have received? How would this shape his future, and his status? In considering these questions, some clues to the answers may be found by thinking more about the general characteristics of this kind of social and cultural environment.

The Dzakhog region of Kham undoubtedly represented an example of what Geoffrey Samuel would identify as a 'remote agricultural community,' a type of cultural environment typified by a low population base principally engaged in subsistence farming for crops such as high-altitude barley. Naturally, in many such communities these activities would be augmented by trading and limited animal husbandry, but they nonetheless differ substantially in social life and organization from nomadic pastoral groups, centralized agricultural estates, and relatively urbanized communities. From a religious standpoint, such communities typically include a limited number of full-time religious specialists and small-scale temples or *gompa* (*dgon pa*), which generally

provided an assembly hall for rituals but little else in terms of programs and facilities. The population in these rural communities were respectfully aware and supportive of Buddhist ethical and soteriological discourses—what Samuel calls the 'Karma' and 'Bodhi Orientations'—but overall they tended to require more immediate or 'pragmatic' religious services, which were aimed at helping community members—farmers, herders, and tradesmen—meet the challenges and uncertainties of day-to-day life.

It was against this kind of social backdrop that Shardza would undertake religious instruction, primarily by serving as a ritual apprentice to his primary teacher, Ratrul. Ratrul, however, was more than merely a village lama duly performing rituals for his clientele; as a *tulku* or reincarnate lama, he enjoyed both local rank and prestige and, most likely, specialized religious training from a young age. He thus presided over a local *gompa* and is portrayed as nothing less than a masterful Tantric teacher, whose rituals produced potent results and whose motives and actions were informed by high realization.

The biographical accounts of Shardza's formative years depict several primary characteristics of both Shardza and his principle teacher, qualities that represent various facets of a religious ideal emerging from, but not limited to, this type of community. This broad ideal is grounded first and foremost in a deep relationship between student and teacher. The *Pleasure Garden* describes the special manner in which Shardza received initiations, transmissions and advice that helped to forge this important religious bond:

Then, in the presence of Drupchen [Rinpoche, alias Ratrul] not long after, [Shardza] requested that he be granted whatever kinds of empowerments, instructions, guidance and transmissions were appropriate. Consequently, Drupchen [Rinpoche] prophesied things to come in the future. He gave instructions to [Shardza] in connection with personal advice, in which [he

said] that [Shardza] certainly ought to perform work for the teachings. Thus [he told him that] he should establish himself in the three vows¹²⁷ and take the nectar of the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions]. He should strive in meditation practice, render service to the teachings and act for the vast welfare of living beings. [Drupchen Rinpoche] also urged him to remember [his former lives]. All at one time, he gave [Shardza] formal authorization (*rje gnang*) by way of a [special] Pu Ti transmission¹²⁸ and empowerment; and he formally named him, with vast words of praise, an "owner of the teachings", thereby according him a special honor that elevated his status.¹²⁹

This passage conveys some sense for the lama's recognition of Shardza's unique potential as well as his willingness to offer personal advice and special encouragement to help Shardza fulfill it. At the same time, it provides an early statement of an ideal religious career, which consists of the assumption of vows, the receipt of empowerments and instructions, meditation practice, and work intended to benefit the teachings and sentient beings. While the final category remains broad enough to include the activity of writing, one might note that scholastic study, such as we find elsewhere in the Tibetan world, does not factor explicitly into the ideal religious equation set forth here.

The String of Wondrous Gems presents Shardza's ascent as a disciple somewhat differently, occurring more gradually as the young man deepened his relationship not only with his teacher but also with particular Bönpo deities. The process by which this occurred was primarily a ritual one. One learns, for example, that Ratrul built a new room

127 *sdom pa gsum*. These refer to the vows of individual liberation, the vows of a bodhisattva, and those of the vajrayana.

128 *pu ti lung*. The term *pu ti*, or *po ti*, refers literally to a book or text, and I'm told it here refers to a presentation by the master of the entire text to the student. This is done in lieu of actually reading through the text (or parts thereof), which is common practice in the process of transmission (*lung*), and is thus a rare procedure reserved only for special disciples with the right predispositions and capacity.

¹²⁹ PSTS 23.

for the propitiation of the Bönpo guardian Apse (*a bswé*), and put the seventeen-year-old Shardza in charge of daily ritual services. At this time Ratrul bestowed certain transmissions including the authorization rite (*rje gnang*) that serves as an introduction to the deity, and it was in this context that he offered prayers in which he asked that Shardza become an "owner of the teachings." In reflecting back on this event, Shardza confided that he failed to understand the significance of the gesture at the time it occurred, only much later realizing that his lama was not simply enacting routine prayers, but must have believed Shardza to be capable of accomplishing something meaningful.¹³⁰

Both biographies suggest that Shardza's spiritual power and potential displayed itself during these years through uncanny, paranormal phenomena that occurred during his ritual performances. The comprehensive text details the appearance of impressive, publicly-observed signs on many occasions when he was practicing in the protector temple. These manifestations included flames appearing from the adornments atop the temple and at other times dissolving into statues, sparks of light inside the temple, unusual sounds including those of an owl (a sign of the abovementioned protector Apsé), and an apparition of a dark woman with hair flowing down her back floating above Shardza's left shoulder.¹³¹ It was when referring to these remarkable phenomena in *The Pleasure Garden* that Tenpé Gyaltzen felt compelled to assert the integrity of his reports, as described in the preceding chapter. That is because these signs all point to a growing familiarity and rapport with the potent deities he served and to a concomitant accumulation of Tantric power, an important source of religious authority in remote Tibetan communities.

¹³⁰ NBT 69.3.

¹³¹ NBT 80.1-81.1.

Shardza's growth during this period was not solely confined to the ritual sphere, however. *The String of Wondrous Gems* also reveals that at the age of eighteen Shardza began to take a strong interest in reading and reflection. Living at the temple, he had access to religious texts that he began reading in earnest, and he would later recall that during this time he felt as if something were missing when he was without something to read. This newfound relationship to sacred literature marks an important stage in his development, and represents a theme his biographer naturally emphasizes and later revisits. Here Tenpé Gyaltzen reports, briefly but significantly, that important changes in Shardza's outlook began to result from the reading he did. In particular, Shardza began to see worldly things as illusory and without essence, and for the first time a strong desire to renounce ordinary life powerfully emerged.

Shardza's wish to renounce the world did not find expression in a greater commitment to the monastic life, however, or to his duties in the protector temple. As Georges Dreyfus has observed, the monastic life led even by monks attending the huge Gelukpa monastic institutions in Central Tibet—famous for their scholasticism—was dominated on a day-to-day basis by ritual activity. This being the case, one might imagine the extent to which various kinds of ritual performances and assemblies likely predominated in the remote valleys of rural Kham—activities that often involved working in groups to satisfy the needs of myriad patrons. So it was that the monastic routine and everyday ritual obligations might well have appeared more as a hindrance than a help to Shardza as he contemplated ways to advance on the spiritual path.

Shardza's impulse to abandon even the monastery itself is naturally interpreted as a sign of the depth and authenticity of his renunciation, and of his inclination towards a life dedicated to retreat. However, it also appears rather humorously as a sign of youthful

rashness and romanticism, as is made clear by his teacher's reaction to the young pupil's sentiments. This episode also happens to provide occasion for the first narrative expression of Ratrul's powerful persona:

One day, Shardza didn't remember that he needed such things as food and clothing.... He went to his lama and said, "I want to renounce *saṃsāra*." The lama's eyes widened. "If you abandon *saṃsāra*, it should be like this," he said, immediately standing up from his seat. There was a gun nearby; he lit the fuse on the gun and pointed it at his chest. Shardza became frightened, ran out and hid in the protector temple. To a *geshé* named Palden who was junior to the abbot, the lama said, "Take care of him, and don't send him anywhere else." The *geshé* brought Shardza some food and inquired, "What kind of crazy thing did you ask him?"¹³²

This story illustrates the spontaneity and unpredictability of the Tantric master Ratrul, who guides his disciple in this case through both his own dramatic response as well as his quiet dispatching of the reasonable *geshé*. The latter convinces Shardza that, all good intentions aside, he ought to request and practice teachings in an orderly fashion before wandering off. The episode concludes with the pensive Shardza agreeing and returning to the presence of his lama, who predicts that in the future Shardza will become an itinerant yogin dwelling in isolated places.

The relationship between guru and disciple introduced here and reinforced elsewhere, as we shall see below, builds upon narrative tropes widely known in Tibetan literature by the twentieth century. Tales of strange, alarming and unorthodox behavior on the part of a Tantric master are widely reported amongst Tibet's 'saintly madmen' (*smyon pa*), as well as myriad others who have actively followed in the footsteps of the charismatic

¹³² NBT 71.1ff.

translators who were heir to the Indian *mahāūsiddha* lineages. And reports of a disciple's special karma and capability, his dramatic attainment of religious experience through the guru's skillful means, and his firm resolve to undertake a life of intensive retreat similarly mark a culturally recognized and widely esteemed religious path. It is this soteriological model that Tenpé Gyaltzen draws upon the most in describing Ratrul as a teacher and Shardza as a disciple.

In fact, Tenpé Gyaltzen's accounts of Shardza's most influential guru consistently focus on the impressive and at times socially unorthodox expressions of Ratrul's Tantric power and realization. *The String of Wondrous Gems* presents several brief episodes in Ratrul's career, each of which illustrates his paranormal abilities and his direct approach. In one such story, a nomad comes to see Ratrul and asks about his fate in future lives; the lama clairvoyantly discerns that the nomad had committed the negative action of killing a brown bear, which he bluntly discloses. The nomad denies the accusation and is admonished by Ratrul to "remind himself," but instead issues a second denial. At this point, the lama, "his face turning black," angrily pronounces, "in that case, I don't remember anything!" The nomad, breaking down in tears, then confesses, after which the lama advises him to do some specific merit-making activities. The tale ends, rather ominously, by reporting that the lama said nothing about future rebirths, and the nomad did not ask again.¹³³

In another, more overt display of Tantric power, a story is related about Ratrul's response to a drought at the end of the spring season in 1879. On this occasion, Shardza accompanied his lama to a lake in the area, along with a ritual officiant (*gsol dpon*)

¹³³ NBT 73.5-74.3.

named Kelzang Dargyé (*skal bzang dar rgyas*), to coerce rain. Denoted here as 'great *siddha*' (*grub thob chen po*), the lama disrobed completely, used his shawl in imitation of a winged *garuda* and danced; he then told Shardza to undress, handed him a spear and a conch, and instructed him to quickly circumambulate the lake. Laughing, Ratrul said to his protégé, "Ha! Ha! O son of my heart.... Sustain the natural state [of mind] (*gnas lugs*) and it's a pleasure!" Maintaining a dancing posture and the presence of awareness, he inserted the spear into the lake "without focusing on appearances" and then threw a ritual weapon into the lake. Suddenly black clouds appeared on the horizon and, "without even taking time for tea," they hurried back to the monastery. According to the story, lightning and three days and nights of rain quickly followed, such that the people rejoiced and the crops were good that year.¹³⁴

This episode aptly shows how a Tantric virtuoso might express an elevated view that alludes here to the naturalness and spontaneity of the Great Perfection while simultaneously addressing the pragmatic concerns of a remote village community. Despite his strong reputation—indeed, because of it—he was regularly asked to help with mundane local affairs; for example, miraculous success was reported after he was called in to perform a ritual to cure two horses that had contracted an unusual illness. Other examples of Ratrul's work include a number of impressive exorcisms and communications with the spirit world, involving powerful forces such as disturbed local 'landlord' spirits (*sa bdag*), obstructing *si* spirits (*sri*), and 'demon kings' (*rgyal gdon*), as

¹³⁴ NBT 88.3ff.

well as human agents such as possessed Buddhist monks, crazed village women and afflicted local officials.¹³⁵

While it is not uncommon in Tibetan literature to find these kinds of accounts, the tales of Ratrul's Tantric power are noteworthy in the context of the biography. They represent one of the only examples in the work of the type of religious power that can be morally ambiguous, socially unsanctioned and potentially violent, a power that is both the basis for authentic religious experience, valid lineage and popular support and yet is potentially anathema to political authorities and conservative, institutionally-oriented monastics. Given that Tenpé Gyaltzen's potential audiences included celibate monastic scholars who found fault with Shardza's alleged unorthodoxy, perhaps it should come as no surprise that he reports virtually no such unconventional Tantric activity—such as sexual yoga, ritualized violence, or shocking behavior—in the later career of Shardza. Rather, the biography maintains a measure of distance between Shardza and the ethically questionable dimensions of Tantric tradition, while nevertheless capitalizing on the potency and the popular appeal that is undeniably part of its unique cachet.

Among the various anecdotes that demonstrate the extent of Ratrul's Tantric power in the region, one is especially significant in its implications for Shardza: the account of how Ratrul transmitted his own realization to his close disciple. According to *The String of Wondrous Gems*:

When Shardza was twenty-four years of age, there was a great drought in the region once again. Shardza was attending his lama in an effort to bring rain, and there was a strong windstorm, so that the rain clouds were unable to remain in the area. An elder man had offered an old sword upon which

¹³⁵ cf. NBT 89.4-90.2; 106.6-109.3

mantras had been written, and Ratrul had instructed Shardza to concentrate on the mantras and "push down the wind," after which he was to strike a tree with the sword. Suddenly the lama appeared unexpectedly, grabbed the sword and exclaimed, "Not like that!" The lama knocked Shardza down and danced in a wrathful manner; he jumped up and down and struck Shardza with the sword five times and rebuked him, saying, "You need this!" He then put the sword back in Shardza's hand and departed. Shardza was left with a large wound and there was a lot of blood. He fell into a dark unconsciousness and woke up as if from sleep. He saw his lama making the gesture for subduing demons in the space before him, and he received the blessings of the Mind Lineage (*dgongs brgyud*). Naked awareness beyond expression and thought directly manifested. Like the pure sky being infused by daylight, an effortless realization was born in his heart, boundless and continuous day and night in the expanse of the great radiant light of primordial purity. In about the time it takes to prepare tea, the scar from the wound on his body disappeared.¹³⁶

In the abridged edition, Tenpé Gyaltzen clearly identifies the import of this event: "He awoke from that and the wisdom mind (*dgongs*) of the ultimate lineage (*don brgyud*) had been transferred to his mind-stream; [Shardza himself later] said that because realization equal to that of that majestic Siddha [Drupchen Rinpoche] became visibly manifest [in him], from then on there no longer arose a distinction in [his experience of] Radiant Light (*'od gsal*), day or night."¹³⁷

From this crucial, transformative event, Shardza's teacher emerges as a Tantric master fully capable of utilizing the most dangerous and fearsome methods to guide his disciple, and therefore embodies an indisputable source for experiential transmission. Secondly, the reader learns that Shardza received the transmission of the Mind Lineage (*dgongs*

¹³⁶ NBT 90.3-91.3.

¹³⁷ PSTS 24.

brgyud), or the lineage that best captures the very thought or intent of the primordial Buddha. This category, which here is further described as the 'ultimate lineage', stands in Nyingma literature above both the lineage of symbolic transmission (*brda brgyud*) and that of oral transmission through language (*snyan brgyud*), representing a gestureless, wordless, mind-to-mind communication that should be understood as the purest and highest type of esoteric transmission possible. Shardza's ability to receive this level of transmission, as well as his profound experience of Radiant Light (*'od gsal*), prefigure his eventual affinity for (and mastery of) Dzokchen teachings and techniques, a topic we shall take up in the following chapter.

Nevertheless, the initial outcome of Shardza's experience of the unconventional, quintessentially Tantric transmission of esoteric knowledge manifested not in, say, an increased ability to concentrate for long periods in meditation or to perform rituals with improved results. In a revealing twist, the experience instead produced a newfound ability to comprehend written scriptures, or as Tenpé Gyaltzen puts it, "the spontaneous understanding of whatever he looked at, without having studied it, regardless of the scriptural tradition from which it came."¹³⁸

Beyond the tutoring in reading Shardza received as a twelve-year-old boy, the biography has made no mention of prescribed study of any kind. While Shardza is said to have taken a keen interest in the books housed in Ratrul's temple, he appears to have reached his mid-twenties with no prior experience in formal, curricular education. In the hands of his biographer, this apparent shortcoming in his training renders his esoteric awakening to knowledge that much more impressive. As the abridged edition puts it, "a

¹³⁸ NBT 91.6.

fearless confidence with respect to all knowable things burst forth from within [Shardza]. Although he had not studied the literary arts within the [sphere of] ordinary cultural knowledge even a little with anyone else, whenever he looked at all of the scriptural texts, an unimpeded knowledge arose [within him]."¹³⁹

Tenpé Gyaltsen's abridged narrative then takes the link between esoteric mind-to-mind transmission and scriptural understanding a step further, asserting a direct connection between this foundational religious experience and Shardza's later production of five well-known textual 'treasuries' (*mdzod*). In the *Pleasure Garden*, he writes: "Thus, it seems as though from that time on the seeds for the *Great Treasuries* (*mdzod chen*) of the present day were written down according to circumstances in the form of scattered [notes]."¹⁴⁰ As he explains in *The String of Wondrous Gems*, "From that time forward, Shardza took notes, compiling a handwritten record encapsulating the meaning of many scriptures (*gzhung*) and esoteric instructions (*gdams pa*)...about a thousand pages in length.... One should know that the various kinds of treatises in his collected works are not written like ordinary people's works."¹⁴¹

Shardza's spontaneous scriptural proficiency was not the only but it was the most central among numerous abilities, accomplishments and activities that reportedly followed from this point in his training. Shardza's receipt of esoteric transmission from Ratrul provide a significant source of spiritual authority, one which Tenpé Gyaltsen utilized to establish Shardza's status not only as a contemplative but as an author. These rather arcane credentials, however, may not have impressed all quarters of Tenpé

¹³⁹ PSTS 25.

¹⁴⁰ PSTS 25.

¹⁴¹ NBT 92.1ff.

Gyalten's readership, a topic to be revisited when we explore his presentation of Shardza's literary corpus.

Precepts

Shardza's mystical and ritual experiences did not represent the only source of spiritual prestige available to him during his youth. These religious qualifications were complemented most significantly by his formal receipt and possession of a complete set of precepts, including the vows of a fully-ordained Bönpo monk. To explore Shardza's relationship to the precepts first requires, however, that we understand what types of vows existed for Bönpos. Secondly, one might wonder: how meaningful was full monastic ordination in remote Bönpo communities during this period? For whom in the Bönpo world, if anyone, did holding monastic vows represent a valued source of religious legitimacy?

As Per Kvaerne has argued, Buddhist and Bönpo lineages share very strong resemblances with respect to monastic rules ('*dul ba*; Skt. *vinaya*). In general terms, the basic principles and the overall structure of Bönpo monastic precepts are very much of a piece with Buddhist models as interpreted in Tibet. For instance, a Bönpo monk must avoid the same four primary transgressions or 'defeats' (*pham pa*, Skt. *parājīka*) that would represent due cause for expulsion from the Buddhist order: namely, sexual intercourse, murder, stealing property of value, and falsely claiming spiritual attainments. Moreover, a Bönpo novice (*gtsang ma gtsug phud*) maintains a limited number of observances (twenty-five) that correspond to those of the Buddhist *getsul* (*dge tshul*), and a fully ordained *drangsong* (*drang srong*)—equivalent to the Buddhist *gelong* (*dge slong*) or *bhikṣu*—holds 250 precepts. Bönpos also organize different types of religious precepts in terms of a triad of three complementary sets of vows (*sdom pa gsum*; Skt. *trīsamvara*),

which are associated with the respective vehicles of individual liberation, the *bodhisattva* (or *yungdrung sempa* for Bönpo), and Secret Mantra (i.e., Tantra).

Tenpé Gyaltzen's condensed portrait of Shardza's life presents Shardza's assumption of vows as a thematic point of focus. This organizational choice indicates that possession and proper observance of monastic and other vows represented one important aspect of an ideal religious career, one that carried enough weight to merit its own explicit presentation. This feature of the *namtar* raises some intriguing questions. Is Shardza's apparent concern for monastic precepts at all typical? Can the claim that Shardza was in fact concerned with the precepts be supported by any other evidence, such as his own writings? Is this image of Shardza one that would enjoy broad appeal among Bönpo in the rural communities of eastern Tibet, or might it be meant for other audiences? With these questions in mind, let us examine Shardza's relationship to the precepts in further detail.

As noted previously, Shardza took refuge at the age of nine, and at age eleven he received the Bön vows of chastity (*tshang spyod*, Skt. *brahmacarya*), in each case from his teacher Ratrul. It is interesting that the quintessentially Tantric master also acts in this capacity as preceptor. This may suggest both the degree to which religious figures in rural Kham fulfilled a variety of necessary roles, as well as the possibility that his Tantric personality has been strongly emphasized for effect in the biographies. It may also indicate some flexibility (or laxity) with respect to the precepts, with might explain why Menri requires all new entrants to retake ordination vows even if they have received them from elsewhere.

In his twenty-fourth year, the same year in which he received the mind transmission of Ratrul, he took novice ordination (*gtsang ma gtsug phud*). The *Pleasure Garden* presents the occasion in celebratory fashion:

Firstly, the holy Abbot and teacher of Shenrab's doctrines, Kelzang Nyima Tokki Gyaltsen,¹⁴² of Yungdrung Ling—an excellent, immaculate branch monastery of the glorious Menri, the seat of the great Nyammé [Sherab Gyaltsen]—arrived in Domé [i.e., Kham] and he met [Shardza]. On that occasion, [the Abbot] was invited to the splendid Dza Tengchen monastery.¹⁴³ His Holiness, the sacred head of all the elder monks keeping the monastic discipline, was himself presiding at that time. Amidst the pure assembly of Bönpo monks, [Shardza] renounced worldly life and duly requested novice vows.¹⁴⁴

In contrast to this straightforward and pious portrait, the full-length narrative confides in a surprising admission that Shardza was not especially keen to take vows at this time, but was enjoined by his teacher to do so. By this time Shardza appears to have strong inclinations toward a retreat-lifestyle—for which monastic vows were superfluous—and Ratrul reputedly confirmed his aptitude, confiding to Shardza that he was uniquely capable among his peers of "wearing the dress of a yogin" (*rnal 'byor pa'i chas su zhugs*). Tenpé Gyaltsen could also explain Shardza's lack of enthusiasm by reminding his audience that, as an emanation of an enlightened being in human form, any kind of religious discipline aimed at gradual progress on the spiritual path was totally extraneous.

142 skal bzang nyi ma tog gi rgyal mtshan.

143 rdza steng chen dgon dpal gshen bstan 'chi med mdo sngags gyung drung bshad sgrub 'phel rgyas gling.

144 PSTS 29. *rab tu byung ste gtsang ma gtsug phud kyi sdom pa legs par zhus*: while both terms can refer to taking novice ordination, here '*rab tu byung*' suggests a broader meaning such as we find in the Sanskrit equivalent *pra-√vraj*, which means "to wander forth" from the world into the mendicant's life, and thus usually by extension "to take ordination". *gtsang ma gtsug phud* is a specifically Bönpo term for the novice vows, which include 25 precepts. NBT confirms this reading.

Indeed, such rhetoric is explicit in the *Pleasure Garden*, where we have seen that Shardza was merely "playing the role of a monk in degenerate times," or "displaying the form of a monk endowed with the three [vows] in these degenerate times," solely as an example for others.¹⁴⁵ The implication here is that the ethical safeguards and prescriptions of the monastic discipline were not needed by the exceptional Shardza, yet the tradition of holding the precepts ought to be preserved for others. Indeed, it was on the basis of accepting vows for the benefit of the teachings and sentient beings that Ratrul succeeded in convincing his disinclined disciple to take his novice vows from the prestigious Yungdrung Ling abbot.¹⁴⁶

As an aside, one might also reasonably conclude that Ratrul's experientially-based, essentially Tantric religious authority—augmented by Shardza's admitted ambivalence—additionally renders it likely that a number of Shardza's local contemporaries, despite their religious aspirations, may have chosen to forgo monastic precepts. The vows seem to have held significant but perhaps only secondary value amidst remote Bönpo communities in Kham during this period, with Shardza himself agreeing to accept novice vows only at the age of twenty-four. While Shardza does in the end take full ordination and successfully maintain the precepts throughout his life—a point naturally lauded by his biographer—he nonetheless waits until the age of thirty before doing so.

As noted in Chapter One, Menri monastery and its affiliate, Yungdrung Ling, were widely recognized as the most prestigious Bönpo monasteries in central Tibet, with significant influence among Bön communities throughout culturally Tibetan areas. The Menri lineage's general authority, especially as it pertains to the transmission of Bönpo

¹⁴⁵ PSTS 3, 12.

¹⁴⁶ NBT 94.3-95.2.

monastic vows, was unparalleled. In light of Shardza's later problems with the hierarchs of Yungdrung Ling, it is quite significant that he received his novice ordination from an abbot of that monastery, Kelzang Nyima Tokki Gyaltsen. The abbot thus serves as an incontestable character witness for Shardza, establishing the purity of his ordination lineage and closing off a potentially serious avenue of attack for his later critics.

Underscoring the importance of this event, both narratives describe an auspicious moment that occurred during the ordination ceremony when the vows were conferred, which prompted the abbot to recognize the young Shardza as capable of advancing the Bön teachings. The *Pleasure Garden* states:

At that juncture he was given by the abbot an ordination name—Tenpa Drukdrak¹⁴⁷—which was repeated three times. There was something like an instinctive shock experienced by all who were seated there; as "Tenpa Drukdrak" was pronounced, there was great laughter. The abbot said that this omen, [the meaning of which] he discerned, was auspicious, and he also gave a prophecy about things to come in the future.¹⁴⁸

The String of Wondrous Gems clarifies the meaning of what happened: When Shardza made a sound to acknowledge his ordination name, he did so loudly, and this spontaneous gesture was in keeping with the sense of the name being conferred, the literal meaning of which is 'Dragon's Roar (i.e., thunder) of Doctrine.' Shardza's gesture and the monks' noisy laughter was a spontaneously appropriate and therefore auspicious response. Moreover, it indicated to the Yungdrung Ling abbot that the young novice would indeed prove successful (and was presumably justified) in vigorously proclaiming the Bön teachings.

¹⁴⁷ bstan pa 'brug grags.

¹⁴⁸ PSTS 30.

While the full significance of this episode can only be appraised from the vantage point of Shardza's later troubles, it is possible that Ratrul may have anticipated these future dynamics when he encouraged his reluctant disciple to request vows. Ratrul seems to have recognized Shardza's ability to succeed as a non-monastic practitioner—at least from a soteriological standpoint—but he may have had concerns from a more sociological perspective. Given that Shardza was a promising student yet bereft of family lineage, *tulku* status, significant wealth or scholastic education, taking vows would have afforded an added measure of religious credibility that in turn created additional opportunities. For instance, Shardza might have stood a better chance of attracting patrons, and he might also have improved his odds of gaining admission to the scholastic program at Yungdrung Ling had he been so inclined. On a more institutional level, Ratrul was likely observing good political etiquette as well, respectfully recognizing an element of the lineage that was the forté of the Yungdrung Ling abbot yet only marginally important to him. His respect for intra-sectarian protocol may therefore have played a part in Shardza's ordination.¹⁴⁹

The following year a certain Metön Nyima Gyaltzen (*me ston nyi ma rgyal mtshan*) encouraged Shardza to join a number of others taking novice vows during a pilgrimage stop in the area of Khyungpo. But since Shardza had received an authoritative set of vows from the Yungdrung Ling abbot, he was uncertain about whether it was proper to take them again. Metön attempted to persuade him by arguing that proponents of a Hinayana system (referred to here as *bye brag smra ba*, Skt. *vaibhāṣika*) may assert that one must

¹⁴⁹ The importance of upholding a pure ordination lineage in the central Tibetan Bönpo monasteries is exemplified by the longstanding requirement that any monk previously ordained elsewhere—no matter his age—must retake his vows (and thereby renounce any claim to seniority) in order to join the assembly as anything other than a transient visitor (personal communication, Lungtok Tenpé Nyima).

give back or break one's vows before taking them again, but in the Bön Tantric system, vows of individual liberation should be understood differently. Metön compares them to bodhisattva vows, which in practice are routinely retaken subsequent to confession, adding that "this is a good subject for investigation."¹⁵⁰ In the end, Shardza acquiesces and reaffirms his novice vows. This decision represents one of the first key examples of a liberal tendency in his thought and action, prefiguring his eventual reputation as a non-sectarian, *rimé* lama. Faced here with a choice that had implications for the purity of his vows, Shardza demonstrates openness to spiritual advice over and above a strict adherence to conservative standards of propriety.

Shardza's assumption of full monastic vows took place when he was thirty at Tengchen Göñ in his home region of Dzakhog. *The String of Wondrous Gems* stresses here that the decision to become a fully-ordained monk took place in accord with both his teacher's prophecy and his own thinking.¹⁵¹ His preceptor on this occasion was a figure described by the *Pleasure Garden* as "one of the eighteen Zhikpo of Dokham,"¹⁵² [an individual known as] Takzhik Choktrul Rinpoche, [or] Shengyal Tenzin (*stag zhid mchog sprul rin po che gshen rgyal bstan 'dzin*). He is named in *The String of Wondrous Gems* simply as Tenzin Pelzangpo (*bstan 'dzin dpal bzang po*). Whereas the full-length story conveys the presence of this monk in the region as largely serendipitous (though

¹⁵⁰ NBT 98.1-4.

¹⁵¹ NBT 121.2-3.

¹⁵² A *zhig po* refers to "an individual who has overcome the faults of holding things to be truly existent of clinging to what is dear" (cf. TDCM, pp. 2387). While 18 are spoken of in the texts, nine lineages are specifically identified, namely: 'gru *zhig*, shel *zhig*, se *zhig*, sgo *zhig*, stag *zhig*, gling *zhig*, snang *zhig*, 'khrul *zhig* and bon *zhig*. According to *geshé* Nyima Dakpa, stag *zhig* mentioned here is still an active lineage, with a present day reincarnation, as is snang *zhig*, which is, incidentally, the basis for the small A-mdo shar-pa monastery by that name which in turn provided the foundation for the large, well-know A-mdo rnga-ba monastery by the same name. He was uncertain about the status of several others, but did believe that the 'gru *zhig*, shel *zhig* and se *zhig* were at least still in existence, albeit rare.

auspiciously so), in the abridged version Tenpé Gyaltzen affirms this individual's excellent qualifications, portraying him as "just the kind of person described in scriptures such as the *The Abridged Code of Monastic Discipline* ('dul ba mdor btus).... His Holiness was a truly exalted person who demonstrated the marvelous, beneficial qualities of the righteous and learned."¹⁵³ Although the two accounts vary somewhat, both clearly confirm that this figure held the unbroken monastic vows of the Menri lineage.

During his ordination Shardza received the name Tenpa Drukdrag Drimé Nyingpo (*bstan pa 'brug grags dri med snying po*), after which he made an offering in thanksgiving to the preceptor and to the monks who took part. Both accounts emphasize the degree to which Shardza was thereafter very conscientious in his observance of his ordination vows. For example, he avoided alcohol, meat that was hunted or killed for his consumption, onions and garlic, and the use of animal skin garments, and he consistently maintained the fundamental practices of monthly confession, daily recitation and prostration (*tshan phyag*) and water-torma offerings (*chab gtor*).¹⁵⁴ For example, the abridged edition states:

Henceforth, [Shardza] acted purely, behaving in complete harmony with the precepts, such that he would never take beer or wine, accept meat that was killed especially for him, or wear garments of animal skins. Along with the external practice of virtue... and the internal practice of confession in a calm state associated with the three [sets of] precepts, [Shardza] exerted himself diligently in the Sūtra practice of the path of abandonment [of faults], and he possessed the pure conduct associated with the [twelve] ascetic virtues.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ PSTS 30.

¹⁵⁴ NBT 123.1ff; PSTS 31.

¹⁵⁵ PSTS 31.

While Shardza may also have been capable of an alternate religious lifestyle, here Tenpé Gyaltzen leaves no doubt that his teacher thoroughly embraced the monastic life and provided an exemplary model for others in his role as a monk. Given the conditions of rural Kham, where Tantric ritual was perhaps most essential to daily life and many religious services could be performed by part-time specialists, fastidious monastics appear to have been relatively rare. Tenpé Gyaltzen certainly aims to underscore Shardza's extraordinary status in this regard, employing degenerate age rhetoric to distinguish him from the sort of unseemly characters previously described. This ascetic purity provides an important complement to his Tantric inheritance, one that held particular value for a conservative, monastic audience. However, a different impression of Shardza's demeanor emerges when we turn to examine his adoption of another set of precepts: those of the bodhisattva.¹⁵⁶

According to Tenpé Gyaltzen, Shardza responded deeply to the bodhisattva ethos as a youth, so much so that his first attempts at writing were dedicated to the topic.¹⁵⁷ Following several years largely devoted to Tantric contemplative practices, Shardza formally received bodhisattva vows at the age of twenty-nine from Samten Yeshé (*bsam gtan ye shes*), who is described as a close disciple of the twenty-fifth abbot of Menri monastery, Sherap Yungdrung (*shes rab g.yung drung*). This took place in the monastery of Shenten Puntsok Ling (*gshen bstan phung tshogs gling*) in upper Dza, at which time Shardza received the ceremonial name Shenpen Norbu (*gzhan phan nor bu*), literally "the

¹⁵⁶ One may note here that Tenpé Gyaltzen's text uses the Tibetan Buddhist and Bön terms for the bodhisattva virtually interchangeably here. He speaks of the tradition of 'arousing the thought for supreme enlightenment' (*byang chub mchog tu sems bskyed pa*) and also refers to the Bönpo term corresponding to the bodhisattva, *g.yung drung sems dpa'*.

¹⁵⁷ At the age of twenty, Shardza composed a text on giving rise to the mind of enlightenment, which he kept hidden but later served as the basis for other materials, some of which were incorporated into the *Atri Kalung Gyatso* (NBT 86.1-87.6) See Chapter Four for more detail.

jewel that benefits others."¹⁵⁸ The *Pleasure Garden* portrays Shardza's assumption of these vows as an especially significant and altruistic act because of their apparent decline in Shardza's home region:

In addition, in comparison with the continuity [of the lineage] of bodhisattva vows that had previously remained uninterrupted, the lineage in [Shardza's] homeland in modern times was on the brink of collapse. Thus, it had come to pass that there is virtually no tradition of [formally] requesting and taking bodhisattva vows. In that context, reflecting on the continuity of the teachings and applying himself in a great endeavor, he duly received [the vows] in accord with all the [necessary] conditions as they are given in the *Thekchen Lha'i Melong* (*The Divine Mirror of the Great Vehicle*),¹⁵⁹ in the presence of the peerless spiritual teacher, the son of the Victorious One and great bodhisattva, Samten Yeshé.¹⁶⁰ He was given the name Gyalsé Shenpen Norbu¹⁶¹ and he was honored and praised.

By making the point that there was virtually no one in Dzakhog among the Bönpo who was especially knowledgeable about or concerned with transmitting the bodhisattva precepts, Tenpé Gyaltzen accomplishes two things. One is to show that Shardza was exceptional in his appreciation for these vows, and so worked to maintain an unbroken lineage of precepts through a recognized Bön source. He also, however, establishes the backdrop for understanding something quite different: the first reported occasion upon which Shardza received formal training from a Buddhist master.

Tenpé Gyaltzen reported that this meeting took place two years later when, at the age of thirty-one, Shardza met a hermit named Dechen Özer (*bde chen 'od zer*) in a remote

¹⁵⁸ NBT 112.2-113.4.

¹⁵⁹ theg chen lha'i me long. Composed by rme'u lha ri gnyen po, a work concerning monastic discipline ('dul ba).

¹⁶⁰ bsam gtan ye shes.

¹⁶¹ rgyal sras gzhan phan nor bu.

locale in Kham described as 'the vicinity of a nomadic pasture in upper Zara' (*stod za ra skor gong ma'i 'brog sgar*).¹⁶² Tenpé Gyaltsen identifies Dechen Özer as a close disciple of the *rimé* Buddhist lama Do Khyentsé, and he appears as an unconventional hermit who, for instance, greets his guest while lying down and shows no interest in the formality of receiving prostrations. Shardza shared his experiences in meditation, and received some confirmation and guidance related to Dzokchen-style contemplations on the mind's nature. He also formally received bodhisattva vows according to two Buddhist frameworks, or what Tenpé Gyaltsen summarizes in the *Pleasure Garden* as "instructions for mind training (*blo sbyang*) on the conventional and ultimate Enlightened Motivation (*bodhicitta*)."¹⁶³

This first example of Shardza's receipt of religious teaching outside of the Bön tradition provides the first instance in the biography of the ecumenical climate for which Kham in this period was well-known. One might note that the inter-sectarian exchange reported here occurs within the context of an individual teacher-student relationship in an isolated setting, and it focuses primarily on esoteric experience. Dispensing with formalities, the Buddhist yogin finds familiarity with and progress in meditative states to be useful ground for dialogue. Unfortunately, it is not clear to what extent Shardza may have actively sought him out, or to what extent it was a chance encounter. It is tempting to suggest, however, that other Bönpos were aware of the presence of this yogi and may have similarly approached him and received instruction.

¹⁶² cf. NBT 131.6-134.1.

¹⁶³ Tenpé Gyaltsen enumerates the bodhisattva vows taken by Shardza with recourse to several classificatory schemes; for details, see PSTS 32-33.

Among the precepts, the bodhisattva vows are certainly the most informal. They require neither the adherence to clear behavioral prescriptions found in the *vinaya*, nor do they demand the fidelity vital to Tantric *samaya*. A person can confess inner transgressions of the bodhisattva vow individually and retake the vow, without requiring community intervention, losing status, or damaging relationships with a guru or deity. Nevertheless, this early instance of Shardza's willingness to receive not only advice but also precepts points to a remarkably broadminded religious perspective.

Shardza's assumption of Tantric commitments (*dam tshig*), unlike his other vows, took place over the course of his life as part of his initiation into the mandalas of different deities. Beginning with his appointment to Ratrul's protector temple when he was seventeen, Shardza began developing a lifelong relationship with Tantric deities, including his main protector Apsé (*a bswe*). The earliest evidence of sustained Tantric practice begins at the age of twenty, when his teacher Ratrul determined that he was prepared to practice the Development Stage (*bskyed rim*) of Deity Yoga, beginning with the peaceful deity Kunzang Asal (*kun bzang a gsal*) and the wrathful deity Walsé (*dbal sras*).¹⁶⁴ He also received a substantial number of initiations and transmissions from Dechen Lingpa in the protector temple during the same year.¹⁶⁵

In the *Pleasure Garden*, Tenpé Gyaltzen summarizes the nature and extent of Shardza's Tantric commitments by first presenting examples of special 'Puti' initiations, in which both his root teacher Ratrul and Dechen Lingpa blessed and honored Shardza with especially quick entry into the domain of particular deities. Tenpé Gyaltzen later augments these brief anecdotes with reference to a classification scheme evident in

¹⁶⁴ NBT 79.4.

¹⁶⁵ NBT 81.1ff.

Shardza's work on religious vows, invoked here to demonstrate that Shardza's Tantric commitments were extensive and complete.¹⁶⁶

The String of Wondrous Gems communicates Shardza's relationship to Tantric deities differently. Rather than thematically addressing the subject of vows or providing a résumé of different classes of commitments Shardza kept, it conveys the depth of Shardza's spiritual connection to certain deities through stories indicating the active presence of divine forces over the course of his life. The extraordinary manifestations during Shardza's early days of ritual service in the protector temple, for example, provide one illustration of an unusual responsiveness on the part of these powerful entities to Shardza's ritual entreaties and commands. The clear implication here is that Shardza had earned the special favor of these deities, something that is only possible for a practitioner keeping pure commitments.

Dream accounts also appear at regular intervals throughout *The String of Wondrous Gems*, and in some instances provide a vehicle for reflection on Shardza's relationship to the Tantric *samaya*. One such dream took place when Shardza was thirty-seven, in which he dreamt that a student of his appeared holding thirteen crystal vases stacked on top of one other. Shardza carefully received these into his possession, after which a disembodied voice told him to "come with his sharp knife." Tenpé Gyaltzen writes that Shardza later explained that the crystal vases represented the commitments of Tantra,

¹⁶⁶ The scheme, which reflects what Shardza lays out in the *sde snod mdzod* (vol. 2, p. 211, or 209ff for the whole topic) organizes the commitments in terms of: the five basic and twenty-five ancillary commitments of the outer Generation Stage [aspect of Tantric practice]; the five basic commitments of the inner Completion Stage [aspect of Tantric practice], together with the ancillary commitments [consisting of] the [thirty] outer vows, the [sixteen] Pombo, the [nine] Nyeché, and the [four] Chepa; and the thirty commitments and the four effortless commitments of the secret Great Perfection. (PSTS 34) See footnotes to the translation for more detailed information on these categories.

balancing the stack of them indicated the difficulty of keeping them, and the knife signified a means of protecting them.¹⁶⁷

When queried again by his biographer later about this dream imagery, Shardza replied that it symbolized the fact that he himself had not broken the commitments early in life—indicated by the fact that he was able to balance the crystal vases successfully. Several years later, when Shardza had many students whom he had initiated—and whose individual behavior relative to their Tantric commitments would be understood to affect Shardza's own well-being—he reportedly saw negative signs in his dreams. Finally, late in life, Tenpé Gyaltzen writes that Shardza saw "neither good nor bad signs, because he had perfected realization and there was no need to protect [the commitments] anymore."¹⁶⁸

One of the basic points to emerge from Shardza's relationship to the Tantric commitments—namely, that their overall significance is provisional and context-dependent—holds true for his relationship to the precepts more generally. Just as the realized Shardza had no need to worry about his relationships with Tantric deities, the young Shardza, Tenpé Gyaltzen suggests, did not actually require the formal rules of monastic discipline to manage his demeanor or develop his religious outlook. I would argue that for Tenpé Gyaltzen's primary audience in rural Kham, monastic vows in particular were not especially significant. What were most compelling about Shardza as a religious figure were his Tantric power and his experiential mastery of Dzokchen meditation. This is evident in Tenpé Gyaltzen's account of Shardza's relationship with his teacher, and is perhaps best captured the language of the *Pleasure Garden*:

¹⁶⁷ NBT 187.2ff.

¹⁶⁸ NBT 188.4.

All of the good qualities of the Grounds and Paths were complete in [Shardza's] mindstream naturally or spontaneously from the energy of the wisdom mind (*dgongs*); thus, his lotus feet were established in the supreme status of a self-manifesting yogin without his needing to worry about making effort in such things as deliberate meditation. The wisdom mind became manifest [in him] through the essential path of the Great Perfection, the summit of [spiritual] vehicles; hence, unlike a person capable of [only following] the system of progressive striving on the gradual path, he was thoroughly renowned and established in the yoga of ultimate truth (*nges pa'i don*) as a person who was able to gain mastery over all the vehicles in the nine stages [of Bön], by virtue of the power of his excellent faculties' instantaneous realization. Nevertheless, taking up the practices of the Practice Lineage's forefathers at about that time in a manner that was hidden to the perception of others, he dwelt as an ordinary Togden (*rtogs ldan*) who relied upon his long hair and a staff.¹⁶⁹

Ultimately, then, Shardza fulfils the ideal of the realized yogin beyond striving and social convention, a religious prototype with great appeal historically throughout Tibet. This ideal was perhaps especially cherished and emulated in remote agricultural and pastoral communities, on the margins of which such practitioners typically dwelt. These areas, which often stretched beyond the limits of effective political and social control, promised the freedom and relative isolation such figures were known to seek. Moreover, the yogic tradition's unconventional attitude, focus on esoteric practice, and rhetoric of non-duality supported the kind of inter-sectarian exchange we see Shardza beginning to explore in earnest.

¹⁶⁹ PSTS 25.

Nevertheless, Tenpé Gyaltzen seeks to balance this view of his teacher with an image that also appeals to more conservative Bönpo. So it is that Shardza is distanced from various kinds of charlatans who populate the religious landscape, anonymous characters who are often derided for their foolishness, pride and hypocrisy. In a particularly scathing indictment, Tenpé Gyaltzen criticizes those who seize the role of non-monastic ritualists:

The majority of today's Bönpos, having learned a few books for [performing] rituals [aimed at acquiring] food, aspire to become only drum-wielding town-wanderers, and some hope that Bön consists only of the enjoyable experiences of this life. [These people] concern themselves with pleasant accommodations, abundant food and drink and congenial attendants, and they perform only the Bön that [is related to] the circumstances of this life. Because there are many who grasp merely at majestic attire, the aesthetic experiences of drums and music, and feast offerings (*tshog 'khor*) of meat and beer [as if these were] essential, the activities of the Bönpo are being seen as [reflecting merely] a predilection for procuring food, and Bön will be perceived to be only chanting liturgy.¹⁷⁰

Against this bleak backdrop, Shardza appears as both a genuinely realized yogin and a genuinely wholesome monk, an ideal that combines the power of the former and the purity of the latter. Each of these trajectories foreshadows Shardza's religious career—in which he becomes a celibate teacher inclined toward retreat, inspired authorship and esoteric transmission—and thus serve to portray Shardza's later life as a kind of natural unfolding of early potential and predisposition.

¹⁷⁰ PSTS 48-9.

CHAPTER 4

Growth: Teachers, Training and Travel

As the young Shardza embarked upon his fledgling religious career, its trajectory was determined most prominently by his religious teachers, by the style of training he was given to practice, and by early periods of travel he undertook beyond the borders of his home region. This formative phase of his life, characterized by the opening up of myriad possibilities for new and varied influences, naturally solicited the careful attention of his biographer. Who would Tenpé Gyaltzen name as particularly influential teachers? How would he characterize Shardza's religious training and the qualifications it engendered? What are his readers led to conclude about Shardza's experiences and his decision-making during his first adventures abroad?

The answers Tenpé Gyaltzen supplies offer further compelling evidence of his inclusive religious ideal, which navigates between satisfying the demands and expectations of his audience, both liberal and conservative. At the same time, his presentation affords a detailed perspective on individuals, practices and key events in Shardza's young adulthood, shedding valuable light on the nuances of a religious life and the local dimensions of Bön.

Teachers

Tibetan tradition has long emphasized the central role played by the religious teacher. Textual sources routinely identify the lama (*bla ma*) or guru as "even more precious than the Buddha himself," highlighting the fact that the personal mentor embodies an indispensable point of direct access to living, authentic lineages of teaching and practice. In ritual and meditative contexts common to both Bön and Tibetan Buddhism, the student actively identifies the lama with enlightened deities so that the latter's qualities and power may be made manifest either in the presence of, or within, the student. For this essential

process to take place, a requisite faith and reverence for the teacher is prescribed, and it is not uncommon for the identification of teacher with deity to spill over into less formalized and more mundane contexts.

The ideal teacher thus serves as an essential lynchpin—a 'root' or foundation for spiritual progress. In this role the ideal lama also represents an altruistically-motivated master of wisdom and skillful means, capable of guiding students with aplomb. The ideal student, meanwhile, discerns the teacher's positive qualities and appreciates the essential function the lama performs. Adopting a humble and devoted demeanor, he or she respectfully renders service to the teacher while faithfully putting into practice the teacher's religious instruction.

The topic of Shardza's religious teachers represents a crucial one for Tenpé Gyaltzen. As evinced in the previous chapter, Tenpé Gyaltzen portrayed Shardza's apprenticeship with Ratrul Tenzin Wanggyal as dramatically fulfilling the ideals of the teacher-student relationship. Shardza's transformative esoteric experience—which included a spontaneous vision of his teacher in the form of the deified master Drenpa Namkha—occurred through Ratrul's remarkable agency and Shardza's faithful receptivity. Occurring within a culturally-recognized framework of Tantric expedients, Ratrul's apparently violent outburst and its miraculous results signal the transmission of a very important type of religious power, made possible through Shardza's dedication as a close disciple.

The prestige of Shardza's teachers naturally have a direct bearing on Shardza's own standing, with their areas of concentration naturally shaping perceptions about his religious qualifications. To put it another way, any apparent lacuna in his teachers' competency would also point to limitations in Shardza's own knowledge. Thus, despite the early narrative's emphasis on Ratrul and the impact of his remarkable feats, one soon

learns that he was hardly the only teacher of significance to appear in the young Shardza's life. In fact, a number of other individuals earned mention as principle teachers in the biographies. The following examines Tenpé Gyaltzen's depiction of those whom he considered most worthy of attention.

In the *Pleasure Garden*, Tenpé Gyaltzen specifically organizes his presentation so as to address Shardza's broad experience as a student, including a section dedicated to describing "how [Shardza] received the nectar of the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] from tremendous spiritual masters." In this segment, Tenpé Gyaltzen broached the subject of Shardza's teachers by first making respectful gestures toward established Bön tradition. From the outset he explained that Shardza duly sought "the source of the Bön lineage," indicating a commitment to traditional scriptures and a respect for primary lineage-holders. Tenpé Gyaltzen then adds that Shardza received empowerments and instructions "from spiritual masters of all the continuous [streams] of the profound Bön order," a comment that at once restricts discussion of his teachers to Bön lineage masters (avoiding any mention of Buddhist preceptors or dialogue partners) while also hinting at Shardza's openness to a breadth of Bön sources that presumably included New Treasure texts.

In the poetic verses that followed and in subsequent prose, Tenpé Gyaltzen proceeded to introduce "twenty-four masters," described as supreme and completely perfect, from whom Shardza received instruction. This number is particularly significant in a Bönpo context as it is strongly reminiscent of a traditional list of twenty-four exemplary Bönpo masters found in the *Zhangzhung Nyengyü* (*The Oral Lineage of Zhang Zhung, zhang zhung snyan rgyud*), one of the most highly-esteemed sources revered in the Drasa. According to Bön tradition, the twenty-four figures in the *Zhangzhung Nyengyü* were responsible for a single, one-to-one stream of oral transmission over the generations,

which preserved one of the oldest extant strands of Bönpo Dzokchen. Following the twenty-fourth teacher, the oral body of knowledge was then committed to writing in the fourteenth century. By alluding to this established framework, Tenpé Gyaltzen appears to suggest that Shardza stands as an heir to this tradition.

Nevertheless, the list of Shardza's teachers presented here names a number of figures associated with New Treasure and New Bön, and who might legitimately be associated more broadly with the Buddhist *rimé* movement. Tenpé Gyaltzen goes so far as to say that Shardza was unbiased with respect to sectarian affiliation, celebrating the fact that "from the time he was small, [Shardza] rejoiced more and more in his heart in following non-sectarian teachers (*ris med pa'i bla ma*)."¹⁷¹ He then contrasts Shardza's laudably open-minded orientation to that of certain people in this degenerate age who, regrettably, "treat a few lamas of their own order as Buddhas, whether [those lamas] have good qualities or not, and are lax in their respect for [those of] other [sects]."¹⁷²

Tenpé Gyaltzen's presentation of Shardza's twenty-four principle teachers limits itself to summarizing specific cycles of transmission Shardza received from each individual, covering a full range of textual categories. These address subject matter including canonical sources (*bka'*); scriptural exegesis (*bka' rten*) and contemporary commentary; exoteric Tantric ritual; esoteric Tantric ritual; Tantric cycles for the principle Bönpo meditational deities; secret *ḍākinī* Tantras; ultra-secret Great Perfection cycles; and cycles of New Treasure.¹⁷³ It is noteworthy that Tenpé Gyaltzen does not avoid the last category altogether; clearly, the New Treasure materials represent for him a valuable component within the full range of Bön religious literature. His task, then, becomes one

¹⁷¹ PSTS 37.

¹⁷² PSTS 37.

¹⁷³ PSTS 39-45.

of demonstrating Shardza's receipt of and familiarity with this valuable breadth while also assuring the reader of Shardza's commitment to fundamental Bön sources. Not insignificantly, Tenpé Gyaltzen's summation of these literary materials proceeds in the order given above—beginning with the Bön canon and gradually encompassing the most esoteric and exalted textual rubrics—before finally mentioning New Treasure as a kind of appendix, suggesting its ancillary status both in Bön and in Shardza's own religious priorities.

This textual sequencing appears significant in light of the author's self-aware statements that quickly ensue concerning his arrangement of Shardza's teachers. Prior to listing Shardza's principle teachers, Tenpé Gyaltzen writes, "These teachers have not been arranged hierarchically in terms of their good qualities, but rather from the perspective of how [Shardza] obtained their grace."¹⁷⁴ Of course, this caveat allows Tenpé Gyaltzen to avoid personal affronts to specific segments of his audience, some of whom might feel, for example, that Drasa hierarchs such as the former Yungdrung Ling abbot (who served as Shardza's novice preceptor) ought to receive early mention. However, his stipulation also presumes that his audience will assume a hierarchical dimension to his descriptive sequencing, so that he takes pains to assure us that *in this case* his arrangement is merely diachronic and does not carry any such implication—a disclaimer noticeably absent in relation to his ordering of Bön religious literature.

Thus employing a chronological account of Shardza's teachers, Tenpé Gyaltzen commences his summary segment with Ratrul Tenzin Wanggyal, whom he describes as "a singular teacher, an incomparably kind Tantric lineage master." The *Pleasure Garden*

¹⁷⁴ PSTS 44.

then proceeds with its synopsis of twenty-four individuals, briefly highlighting transmissions received from each that together combine to portray a complete, well-rounded sampling of Bön. In an interesting twist at the conclusion of this litany, Tenpé Gyaltzen draws attention to six individuals besides Ratrul who should be recognized as teachers who "seemed perpetually to serve as objects of praise."¹⁷⁵ These especially-revered individuals included the treasure-revealer Tsewang Dragpa, his disciple Tsewang Gyurmé, Kundrol Dūdul Lingpa, Samten Yeshé, as well as the puzzling figures of Shengyal Tenzin and Rinchen Namgyal.¹⁷⁶ The following represents a brief look at the possible significance of each of these figures, both in their relationship to Shardza and in the kind of religious authority they possess.

Shardza first met Tsewang Drakpa, alias Dechen Lingpa (*bde chen gling pa*, 1833-1893), at the age of twenty. This prominent lama represents one among several high-profile Bön treasure-revealers to have played a key role in Shardza's life. Also known by the name Terchen Kundrol Sangtsal (*gter chen kun grol gsang rtsal*), this influential lama—who received a number of visionary revelations from Pema Chungné—bestowed a large number of initiations, teachings and transmissions at the time of their initial meeting, and he also made predictions about the young Shardza's future greatness.¹⁷⁷ Five years later, Shardza received a significant amount of guidance and encouragement a second time from Dechen Lingpa in the monastery known as Karru Densa (*dkar ru gdan sa*) in Kyungpo, which he visited while undertaking his first pilgrimage. At that time Dechen Lingpa offered career advice, urging Shardza to engage in retreat in his home

¹⁷⁵ rgyun du bsngags brjod kyi yul du mdzad par snang (PSTS 44).

¹⁷⁶ tshe dbang grags pa, tshe dbang 'gyur med, kun grol bdud 'dul gling pa, bsam gtan ye shes, gshen rgyal bstan 'dzin, rin chen rnam rgyal (PSTS 44).

¹⁷⁷ NBT 81.1ff. For more on his life and the contents of his revelations, cf. Achard 2004.

region of Dzakhog, and he again foretold a promising future. Given the growing alternatives now open to the post-adolescent Shardza, which we will return to assess below, this advice provides a good illustration of the religious orientations of the New Treasure tradition. At an age in which he could undertake more intensive study or associate himself with prominent monasteries, Shardza is encouraged instead to deepen the kind of contemplative experience for which the treasure-revealers were well-known.

Shardza's continuing respect for Dechen Lingpa and his lineage is evident when the treasure-revealer's "spiritual son," Tsewang Gyurmé, arrived in Dzayul fifteen years later. Despite the fact that Shardza was already an accomplished forty-year-old lama at this time—with a burgeoning reputation and students of his own—he nonetheless received a number of teachings and transmissions from Tsewang Gyurmé. Mentioned among Shardza's most esteemed teachers, Tsewang Gyurmé bestowed Dechen Lingpa's confession and atonement practice (*ltung bshags*), as well as the preliminary and main practice sections of the Atri (*a khrid*) tradition of Dzokchen meditation, which Shardza had previously received from Dechen Lingpa and others.¹⁷⁸ Shardza then took up these foundational practices once again—despite having done so "many times"—in what is represented as an extraordinary appreciation for the value of purification practice and merit accumulation.

The Kundrol incarnation Dūdul Lingpa first appears in 1889, when he was invited to Tengchen Gön in Dzakhog from the monastery of Mōngyal Ling (*smon rgyal gling*).¹⁷⁹ During his stay, a group of practitioners undertook a hundred-day retreat, and Kundrol recommended to the thirty-year-old Shardza that it would be beneficial were he to render

¹⁷⁸ NBT 199.2ff.

¹⁷⁹ NBT 149.6ff.

service for those so engaged. During the retreat Shardza asked lots of questions and "the teacher naturally answered difficult and essential points, undoing the knots of doubt that Shardza had." During this time Shardza reflected on the circumstances of his prior religious training, and he felt dissatisfied with the inevitable distractions of ordinary monastic life—such as enduring "the flattery of high status individuals and the need to perform rituals for oneself and others." While Shardza had previously reported similar inclinations—the reader will recall that he had reputedly expressed thoughts of abandoning Tenchen monastery when he was eighteen—it is telling that his encounter with Kundrol rekindled these sentiments.

Like Dechen Lingpa before him, Kundrol embodied for Shardza the potential benefits and the allure of a retreat-based lifestyle amidst a practice-oriented, yogic community. This career path contrasted both with the scholastic training programs available in the Drasa and with the ritually-based institutional pattern represented by local *gompas* like Tengchen. Exposed to Kundrol's style of practical instruction within a community retreat setting, Shardza reportedly concluded that he had not yet been able to take advantage of the benefits of solitary retreat, despite the fact that by this stage of his life he had accumulated extensive esoteric experience. Inspired to commit more fully to this approach to religious life, he made pledges to Kundrol that entailed a more austere and less conspicuous existence; specifically, he vowed never to perform "town rituals" or to ride on a horse before he was fifty years of age, and he also promised to undertake travel to isolated retreat places.

The monastic throne-holder at Tengchen, Nyima Özer, was reportedly dismayed by Shardza's apparently rash pledges, and expressed concern as to whether Shardza "would have the stamina to survive in mountain abodes." It seems likely that Nyima Özer did not especially appreciate the charismatic treasure-revealer's instigations, which spurred

Shardza to move away from the dynamics of institutional monastic life and toward this more open-ended, retreat-based lifestyle. An emphasis on personal retreat thus characterized the advice of the New Treasure figures Shardza counted as primary teachers, revealing a religious orientation that reflects their own valuation of and reliance upon both esoteric experience and relative independence.

Nyima Özer's misgivings aside, Shardza's affinity for a more hermetic lifestyle, beyond the norms and constraints of monastic routine and social etiquette, is clearly valorized. Tenpé Gyaltsen leaves no doubt that it has arisen from genuine spiritual inclination, no longer tinged with youthful naïveté. In accord with his personal proclivity and in fulfillment of his pledge to Kundrol, Shardza spent significant portions of his life practicing and teaching in retreat settings, as we shall see in the following chapter. Additionally, in the years immediately following this encounter, Shardza regularly taught from the works of Kundrol, especially an instructional text (*khrid yig*) on Great Perfection contemplative training known as the *Marmo Dzubtsuk* (*The Finger Pointing [Directly] to the Red [Heart], dmar mo mdzub tshugs*). Given the first Kundrol incarnation's status as a foundational New Treasure figure (one of the 'quartet of reincarnate lamas'), Shardza's early enthusiasm for these materials undoubtedly played into his eventual portrayal as New Bön.

Based on the representation of Shardza's relationship with the first two of the five teachers singled out as especially significant to him, it is clear that Tenpé Gyaltsen unequivocally portrayed Shardza as embracing progressive elements within the lineage. Shardza finds these treasure-revealers to be discerning, solicitous and inspiring, and he gratefully receives teachings from them that he actively uses in training students before authoring his own practical guidebooks. Rather than downplay or diminish the role of such figures, Tenpé Gyaltsen's strategy instead seeks to achieve a balance,

complementing the type of religious approach they represent by presenting compelling examples of more typically orthodox figures. One of the more interesting of these is the third figure named among Shardza's principle teachers, Samten Yeshé.

Samten Yeshé first appears in Shardza's life when Shardza was twenty-nine, during the encounter in which Shardza received bodhisattva vows in upper Dza at the monastery of Shenten Puntsok Ling (*gshen bstan phung tshogs gling*).¹⁸⁰ However, Samten Yeshé is depicted not only as a source of pure vows that originate with the Menri abbot Sherap Yungdrung, but also as a discerning lama and a qualified contemplative. For example, when Shardza first approached him to request instruction, Samten Yeshé reported a meaningful dream in which he saw a red man riding on a red horse, which indicated to him that Shardza's protector was a Tsen (*gstan*) spirit. This perception was confirmed by Shardza, who replied that he made offerings to Apse (*a bswe*), a Bön guardian belonging to this class of beings.

Samten Yeshé thus serves as an intriguing example of the composite authority and power claimed by the time-honored tradition. While the Menri lineage derives special authority from its impeccable conservation of precepts and its ongoing utilization of ancient scriptures, it also claims a long tradition of esoterically-derived knowledge. Indeed, Tenpé Gyaltzen underscores Samten Yeshé's abilities in this regard, and in the process establishes that Shardza's contemplative knowledge (and later teaching) derives in part from practicing according to orthodox esoteric tradition.

Upon their meeting, Shardza went about performing a number of practices aimed at accumulating merit and arousing the bodhisattva motivation—thus establishing a solid

¹⁸⁰ NBT 112.2ff.

framework for systematically receiving teachings—and Samten Yeshé was reportedly very pleased with him. Shardza then requested instruction in an influential cycle of Great Perfection esoteric practices from the *Zhangzhung Nyengyü*, known as *The Seven Radiant Lights* (*zhang zhung snyan rgyud kyi od gsal bdun skor*). The contents of this section of the text concern advanced visionary practices undertaken during the 'dark retreat' (*mun mtsham*), a topic to be revisited in greater depth below in the context of Shardza's contemplative training.¹⁸¹ Samten Yeshé agreed that he would be able to teach these practices to Shardza if Shardza could demonstrate some contemplative awareness, so Samten Yeshé proceeded to teach successively "the view of the Great Seal, the Great Perfection, and the Middle Way," after which he concluded that Shardza had good recognition of the mind's nature.

Shardza then embarked upon the dark retreat under Samten Yeshé's guidance, achieved signs of success, and later gave instructions on the authority of his transmission. When he was approached four years later by a monk named Kelzang Dorjé (*skal bzang rdo rje*) from Möngyal monastery, Shardza reportedly told him: "My lama, Samten Yeshé, said, 'When you complete the *Ösel Dun* (*The Seven Radiant Lights*) three times, if there is a worthy vessel, then you can give this teaching.' I have practiced it three times, so I can teach you."¹⁸² *The String of Wondrous Gems* additionally lists a number of teachings and transmissions Samten Yeshé conveyed to Shardza, headlined by several important Drasa texts Samten Yeshé received directly from the Menri abbot Sherap

¹⁸¹ NBT 114.3.

¹⁸² NBT 158.1.

Yungdrung.¹⁸³ On the whole, Shardza's relationship with Samten Yeshé highlights how Shardza properly obtained esoteric training within a comprehensive and structured framework—inherited from the Old Bön tradition—and how he proceeded to teach Bön's most advanced contemplative practices on that basis.

The final two individuals singled out as "perpetual objects of praise," namely, Shengyal Tenzin and Rinchen Namgyal, seem to find inclusion more because of what it was they conveyed (or were associated with in the latter case) than because of any especially deep or meaningful connection with Shardza. The *Pleasure Garden's* litany of masters accords Shengyal Tenzin equal time among others, lauding him as a throneholder who "was exalted due to the glory of his noble qualities of learning, discipline and goodness," and presenting two initiations Shardza reputedly received from him in connection with the ordination ceremony.¹⁸⁴ The much more comprehensive *String of Wondrous Gems*, however, makes no mention of the initiations or transmission referred to in the *Pleasure Garden*. As noted previously, it describes Shengyal Tenzin's presence as Shardza's monastic preceptor as the result of an unforeseen, albeit auspicious, coincidence: "When Shardza was thirty, in accord with the prophecy of [Ratrul] and his own thinking, he decided it was time to become a monk. Just like water springs up and reveals itself (*brdol ba*) for one who is thirsty [through karma and conditions]... he had the auspicious fortune (*rten 'brel*) of a monk named Tenzin Palzangpo (*bstan 'dzin dpal bzang po*) appearing, who held the unbroken Menri lineage."¹⁸⁵ This individual, whose full appellation thus appears to be Shengyal Tenzin Pelzangpo, seems to have been

¹⁸³ These texts begin with Atri material Samten Yeshé received in the presence of the Menri abbot Sherap Yungdrung and include the abbot's personal commentary, and they then proceed with orthodox texts such as the *rdzogs chen yang rtse klong chen* and the *mnyam med nang bsgrub* (NBT 118.4-6).

¹⁸⁴ PSTS 40.

¹⁸⁵ NBT 121.2ff.

counted among Shardza's primary teachers solely to affirm the importance of the celibate monastic tradition to Shardza as well as his association with the orthodox Menri ordination lineage.

Meanwhile, the final figure Tenpé Gyaltzen chose to bring to light as a primary teacher, Raplek Lama Rinchen Namgyal (*rabs legs bla ma rin chen rnam rgyal*), appears to be another curious choice. As in the previous case, it appears that Rinchen Namgyal has been included in the *Pleasure Garden's* account to underscore Shardza's high regard for orthodox tradition, in this case symbolized by four ritual texts, widely-used in the Menri liturgical system, for which he reportedly gave Shardza initiation and oral transmission.¹⁸⁶ These include a ritual text for helping the deceased, along with important Tantric material including texts for propitiating primary Bönpo wrathful deities. Once again one can only conclude that what Shardza reputedly received from this individual is more significant to the biographer than the person who actually transmitted these materials. This conclusion is necessitated, rather astonishingly, by the fact that no one by this name appears as a teacher of Shardza anywhere in *The String of Wondrous Gems*. Instead, the text portrays a certain Rabla (as opposed to Rablek) Rinchen Namgyal as in fact a disciple of our protagonist.¹⁸⁷ This surprising fact suggests that Shardza did not enjoy especially close, personal student-teacher relationships with individuals strongly connected to the Drasa lineage, with the possible exception of Samten Yeshé. This aspect

¹⁸⁶ PSTS 41.

¹⁸⁷ His name initially appears when Shardza was thirty-six, a year after Shardza began to attract his first disciples to the small hermitage he founded. Thus, in the context of detailing some of the teachings Shardza gave, the *String of Wondrous Gems* tells us that Rabla Rinchen Namgyal came and received the four initiations of the Magyü (*ma rgyud*) Tantric cycle, after which Shardza had auspicious dreams (NBT 173.6ff). In Shardza's thirty-eighth year, Rabla came to Shardza's hermitage once again and received the dark retreat teachings according to the *Ösel Dun*, practicing them together with a number of other practitioners (NBT 188.5ff). He appears again at the work's conclusion amongst a list of Shardza's important disciples (NBT 584.4).

of Shardza's developing career provides a notable challenge to his biographer, one that provides an important backdrop to Tenpé Gyaltzen's intriguing account of Shardza's first pilgrimage.

Surveying broadly, one finds the portrait of Shardza's teachers promotes ideals not only of comprehensiveness but also of diversity and inclusivism, very much in keeping with the ecumenical or *rimé* tradition. This contrasts sharply with the model of scholastic training promulgated most famously in the large Geluk institutions of Central Tibet, where, for example, monks at Sera Jé would as a rule avoid requesting teachings from more than one principle mentor even within their own monastery.¹⁸⁸ Tenpé Gyaltzen boldly and poetically exalts Shardza's all-embracing religious approach, singling out this aspect of Shardza's character as his very best:

Even though all rivers collect in the great sea, it is never satiated; just so, from long ago this majestic lama [Shardza]—though a great being who was a vast ocean of Bön—even still acted in such a way as to perpetually and insatiably gather myriad rivers of all the various classes of Bön. He lived as a supreme holder of the doctrine who lovingly sustained the teachings, and of all the ornaments of good qualities belonging to this great being, this was the single foremost.

Contemplative Training

The range of teachings Shardza received from diverse quarters may have run the gamut in terms of their contents, but there is no doubt that the contemplative aspect of his training represents the single most important source of his religious legitimacy, finding detailed expression even in what is structured as an exoteric biography. The thematic *Pleasure Garden*, for its part, devotes a segment specifically to "how [Shardza] made his

¹⁸⁸ Dreyfus 2003, p. 60.

mark in meditation practice in solitary places," further discussing the subject in terms of "how he held the demeanor of a hermit" and "how he experientially trained in Sūtra, Tantra and the Great Perfection."

In the chronological *String of Wondrous Gems*, the reader will have already noted Shardza's budding interest in the esoteric dimension of religious life as a consistent thread running through the text. Even as a toddler we learned that Shardza enjoyed caves and pretending to meditate as well as talking with disembodied beings, while at age eleven, he showed special admiration for hermits and those with Tantric ritual accouterments. As a young eighteen-year-old disciple he expressed a wish to renounce not only worldly life but also that of his local monastery, prompting Ratrul to predict a future as a hermit. In the context of monastic vows, he was said to have been capable of becoming a non-celibate yogi, and through his guru he experienced visions, miraculous events and authentic mind-to-mind transmission. Through the inspiration of treasure-revealers like Kundrol, he later made retreat practice a priority in contrast to a more conventional and socially active monastic life. Finally, we also saw that he demonstrated interest and proficiency in meditative techniques under Samten Yeshé, gaining familiarity with the 'nature of mind' presented most notably in the Great Perfection and earning teaching competency in associated practices, such as the Great Perfection dark retreat.

The String of Wondrous Gems also explicitly portrays the young Shardza as a practitioner with a keen interest in Development and Completion Stage Tantric methods—the sort of thing that one might expect given his apprenticeship with Ratrul. After all, Shardza's relationship with Ratrul represented the most significant source of religious education and training he received in his adolescence, a training that centered on building relationships with Bönpo deities through ritual service. This ritual instruction, involving regular interaction with Tantric deities and the performance of specially framed

acts of visualization, recitation and physical gestures, in turn set the stage for an early interest in contemplative practices that drew upon a shared ideological and technical vocabulary. It stands to reason that the early training Shardza received in esoteric ritual practices in the protector temple helped to pave the way for advanced Tantric meditations and a growing commitment to the retreat life.

The String of Wondrous Gems describes in particular how in his late twenties Shardza gained experience in yogic practices related to the manipulation of subtle 'channels and winds' (*rtsa rlung*). Specifically, at the age of twenty-seven, Shardza received training from the throne-holder of Tengchen Göñ, the *tulku* Nyima Özer (*nyi ma 'od zer*), in key contemplative practices about which he would eventually write authoritative works. He received detailed instruction on the *Tsalung Khandro Sangdzö* (*The dākinī's Secret Treasury on Channels and Winds*, *rtsa rlung mkha' 'gro gsang mdzod*), a text authored by Kundrol Drakpa on yogic practices aimed at channeling the energies of the subtle body. The training Shardza received at this time focused upon both the Development Stage (*bskyed rim*) of deity yoga, involving stable visualization and ritual service, as well as Completion Stage (*rdzogs rim*) practices working with subtle body yogas. For example, utilizing the 'vase breath', which involves breath retention, diaphragm control and yogic 'locks' to focus energy in the lower torso, Shardza reportedly demonstrated the well-known signs of success in the practice of 'inner heat' (lit. 'fierce woman'; *gtum mo, candali*), such as using the body heat incidentally produced by the practice to dry out a wet cotton cloth nine times in the course of a night. By cultivating these practices, he is said to have deepened his view of emptiness through the knowledge of great bliss, to

have attained greater contemplative stability, and to have developed a greater appreciation for the profundity of Tantric methods.¹⁸⁹

This comprehensive and effective training, however, was not the only type of *tsalung* instruction Shardza received from the Tengchen abbot. Tenpé Gyaltzen notes that Shardza received further *tsalung* teaching from Nyima Özer a year later, this time according to the orthodox *Zhangzhung Nyengyü*. Tenpé Gyaltzen remarks in this context that Shardza's practice of *tsalung* not only strengthened the consistency of his self-recognition of innate awareness, but also enabled other practices, such as those associated with dream and clear light (*'od gsal*), to develop spontaneously. This persuaded Shardza to make the practice of *tsalung* a focus among Tantric methods, and to encourage others to do likewise.¹⁹⁰

This latter instruction from Nyima Özer also served as a primary basis for a one-hundred day retreat Shardza subsequently completed, which produced an especially impressive sign of attainment: "It seems as if from that time until he was elderly," Tenpé Gyaltzen writes of Shardza, "he used only thin cotton cloth"—a dramatic illustration of Shardza's apparent acquisition of lifelong control over body temperature, an ability most famously associated with yogic cultural icons like Milarepa.¹⁹¹ The reader is led to conclude, then, that Shardza fully embodied multiple lineages of Bön esoteric practice. Having gained entry and vital experience through accessible 'New Bön' materials, he brought his experience to completion through time-honored sources, and did so in a manner befitting the great yogic tradition of Tibet.

¹⁸⁹ NBT 109.3ff.

¹⁹⁰ NBT 111.2-4.

¹⁹¹ NBT 111.4-112.2.

The biographer's efforts to provide an effectively balanced presentation, one that might thereby manage to appeal broadly, are strikingly apparent in his treatment of Shardza's relationship to body-centered Tantric practices. One learns, for example, that during this period Shardza requested teachings from a non-monastic practitioner, Trotsang Togden Gadé (*khro tshang rtogs ldan dga' bde*), on the secret, downward-moving energies (*gsang thur*) associated with the lower centers of the yogic subtle body, which can be utilized in sexual yoga. Putting them into practice, Shardza was reportedly successful in attaining signs of mastery in the yogic reversal of energetic outflows—exemplified here by an ability to draw the smoke of incense up via the 'lower winds' (the anus), and to separate 'milk and water' (through the control of the urethra).

On this highly-charged subject (both literally and figuratively), Tenpé Gyaltzen presents Shardza as fully capable of performing the sexual practices associated with Highest Yoga Tantra, and of recognizing the potential benefits not only of engaging in them but also of eschewing them. "It seems that Shardza could have attained mastery over the lower gateway of great bliss," his biographer writes, "but he followed the order of his lama and principally practiced the upper apertures for a time."¹⁹² Elaborating further, Tenpé Gyaltzen makes clear that Shardza did not engage in sexual practice with a female consort, not because of an inability to do so, but mainly out of consideration for how it would appear to laypeople given the social norms of the day.¹⁹³ In other words, Shardza was not overly constrained in his worldview by rigid monastic requirements, yet his understanding of religious expedients ultimately led him to faithfully uphold the precepts. A similar tone, emphasizing an effective blend of first-hand mystical savvy and

¹⁹² NBT 110.3-111.1.

¹⁹³ NBT 111.1-2.

clear-eyed moral respectability, can be found throughout the depiction of Shardza's contemplative training.

Shardza's early esoteric education culminates with his training in the Great Perfection, the 'ultra-pure' system at the pinnacle of traditional Bön doxographies. As mentioned previously, Shardza received instruction and undertook his first Great Perfection 'dark retreat' under the guidance of Samten Yeshé, leading him to complete several such periods of retreat as he moved into his thirties. Even amidst a so-called 'outer' biography, it is not altogether surprising to find some treatment of the content of these formative experiences given how essential Shardza's esoteric qualifications are to his religious standing.

Indeed, the reader learns that Shardza was instructed to undertake four sessions of practice per day for fifty days (intended to correspond with the seven weeks of the *bardo*, the postmortem transitional period), during which time he advanced through the stages of visionary experience traditionally recognized as indicators of progress. For example, during the first week, visions of five-colored spheres (*thig le*) of luminous light appeared; in the second week, these visions intensified and manifested everywhere, and peaceful forms of deities became visible within the space (*klong*) of these spheres; and during the third week, he saw not only the principle deities but a great variety of images of the five Buddha-families, who were in union with their consorts and displaying different gestures and attire.¹⁹⁴ All of this imagery—light spheres appearing in various configurations, followed by the envisioning of Buddhas within their cores and a gradual intensification of these experiences—corresponds well with the ideal visionary stages characteristic of the

¹⁹⁴ NBT 114.3-115.2.

Great Perfection practice known as *tögal* ("direct crossing," *thod rgal*). It thus provides important foreshadowing for his later meditative attainments in this system, which, as we shall see, are most remarkably evident at the end of his earthly life.

This particular retreat also marks the most significant description of Shardza's practice of 'dream yoga' (*rmi lam rnal 'byor*), a topic upon which he would later write instructional guidelines. It was mentioned above that Shardza's experience with *tsalung* practice had granted him a natural facility for the dream and clear light practices; the reader also discovers that during the period of his dark retreat Shardza experienced many lucid dreams and recalled them, and succeeded in gaining control over the dream state. Tenpé Gyaltzen elaborates: "In Sūtra it says, 'If you see one jackal in a dream, make many! Make a cemetery.... Understand it as a celestial palace... If you see a bird, change it into a *garuda* and ride on it. Go to the wish-fulfilling tree on the peak of the universe and look at the world.'"¹⁹⁵ Further explaining that in the dream state one can consciously transform and manifest objects, see the spectacle of the universe, go under the earth and through rock, and emanate many kinds of bodies, Tenpé Gyaltzen affirms that Shardza successfully mastered a full range of dream experiences as well as the ability to maintain dreamless, 'clear light' sleep.¹⁹⁶

In *The String of Wondrous Gems*, Tenpé Gyaltzen's summary remarks on the outcomes of these important retreats boldly proclaim Shardza's esoteric accomplishments, and with unmistakable implications for his religious knowledge. "Through the power of the dark retreat yoga," the biography states, "[Shardza] didn't intellectually analyze whatever arose spontaneously as the wisdom of his own awareness.

¹⁹⁵ NBT 115.6ff.

¹⁹⁶ NBT 115.6-116.6.

After that, he didn't have to make effort... he was beyond effort."¹⁹⁷ Moreover, he scanned "thousands of pages of books" in his dreams, effectively speed-reading three lines at a time, something reportedly made possible by predispositions from former lives.¹⁹⁸ This essential link between his inner experiences and his understanding of scriptures—previously noted in his unconventional initiation from Ratrul—naturally plays an important role in the portrayal of his later authorship.

In the *Pleasure Garden*, however, Tenpé Gyaltzen presents the results of Shardza's intensive esoteric training much more conservatively, emphasizing simply a strong commitment to practice that can be situated within a traditional Bönpo framework. He writes:

In accord with the genuine practices of the former holy ones of the Dru, Zhu, Pa and Me'u [clans]—the owners of the Practice Lineage teachings, uncontaminated by any local customs whatsoever—[Shardza] principally acted only as a practitioner (*sgrub pa*) as opposed to a commentator (*bshad pa bo*). Moreover, he did not follow after certain people who, counting themselves to be Tantric practitioners, speak senseless views that contradict [the karmic law] of cause and effect, thereby deluding themselves. Sequentially ordering the Preliminary Practice instructions for the cycles of the unsurpassed Tantra and Dzokchen connected with the stages of the Bodhisattva path that are consistent with the scriptural tradition of the incomparable holy father and sons, [Shardza] directly engaged the practice of analytical meditation (*dpyad sgom*), tirelessly persevering.¹⁹⁹

A number of essential points are conveyed through this pithy summation. The opening statement underscores the importance of authentic traditions that have been

¹⁹⁷ NBT 117.1-2.

¹⁹⁸ NBT 117.3ff.

¹⁹⁹ PSTS 49.

effectively transmitted outside of the celibate monastic system through traditional Bön family lineages, positioning Shardza as a conservator of this ancient heritage. In the process, Tenpé Gyaltzen identifies Shardza with the Practice Lineage (*sgrub brgyud*), a key category that stands in contrast to an alternative tradition centering on the scholastic elaboration of doctrine, or what he elsewhere calls the Exegetical Lineage (*bshad brgyud*). We shall have occasion to return to this distinction in the context of Shardza's writings.

Despite the emphasis on esoteric practice, Tenpé Gyaltzen also tempers his portrait by distancing Shardza from the 'senseless views' of certain nominal Tantrikas who clearly behave badly, contravening traditional morality and presumably undertaking certain advanced practices without adequate preparation. In contrast, the reader is assured that the practice-oriented Shardza indeed followed a proper course consistent with an ancient scriptural system—with the 'holy father and sons' (*dam pa yab sras*) representing an allusion to an eleventh century 'great hermit' and his disciples in the Bön Atri lineage of Dzokchen.²⁰⁰ Considered beyond reproach in traditional Bön circles, this system, the author reminds us here, did not fail to integrate a vital analytical component, which allows Tenpé Gyaltzen to counter a possible image of Shardza as an indiscriminating or ill-informed practitioner. Elsewhere Tenpé Gyaltzen alludes rather humorously to such a stereotype, arguing that "not even the scent of the kind of haughtiness associated with scholars (*mkhas pa*) or the foolishness of practitioners (*grub pa*) arose in him."²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ The individual in question is dgong mdzod ri khrod chen po, 1038-1096.

²⁰¹ PSTS 73.

Pilgrimage

The religious inclinations Shardza had been developing during his late adolescence, under Ratrul's guidance, were powerfully augmented by a pilgrimage he embarked upon as a young adult. Tenpé Gyaltzen mentions that the purpose for this ritual journey was to "develop the two accumulations [of religious merit and wisdom] and to make connections with lamas and obtain blessings from them."²⁰² While this is undoubtedly true, Toni Huber has also demonstrated that beyond these typically stated concerns, Tibetan pilgrimage additionally involves less-frequently articulated aims as well as a whole host of ritualized activities repaying analysis on multiple levels.²⁰³ For example, he finds that Tibetan pilgrimage is often motivated in part by the desire to encounter sources of power and blessing in the sacred landscape. Thus the spiritual networking Shardza was encouraged to attempt might typically have involved not only prominent Bönpo lamas at various monasteries, but also spatially situated Tantric *yidam* deities, regional deities or *yul lha*, relics of ancient saints, and special features of the landscape imbued with spiritual power. As we shall see, these elements of pilgrimage narratives add both drama and direction to the life-story of the young Shardza, and provide revealing opportunities for interpretation.

Even from a more pedestrian standpoint, it is difficult to emphasize enough how vitally important such a period of travel would have been in the young Shardza's life. Given the great distances involved and the linguistic and socio-cultural diversity found within traditional Tibet, to leave one's provincial region to explore such terrain was surely no less significant in its overall impact than the present-day experience of many

²⁰² NBT 97.3.

²⁰³ cf. Huber 1996, 1994.

young Americans leaving the country for the first time to study abroad. Moreover, this experience would have rendered Shardza's possible career trajectories no longer constrained by the facilities and priorities of rural Dzakhog. For example, with the establishment of Yungdrung Ling in the mid-nineteenth century, it became possible for young Bönpo monks throughout the Tibetan cultural world to embark upon a scholastic training program in central Tibet. Some academically-inclined Bönpo monks—including the present Menri abbot—were even known to have joined the monastic colleges of the large Geluk institutions for periods of time as part of their educational development.²⁰⁴

Tenpé Gyaltsen reports, in fact, that Shardza's visit to central Tibet as a young adult prompted him to seriously consider this alternative. Though Shardza ultimately opted against the career path adopted by his later critics, his biographer makes a fascinating attempt to explain this outcome amidst his account of Shardza's pilgrimage. As we shall see, in so doing he asserts a profound connection between Shardza and the very heart of the orthodox lineage.

The String of Wondrous Gems begins its description by explaining that, at the age of twenty-five, Shardza joined a traveling party of other young people from Dzakhog—described as close friends with whom he had taken vows—to perform a pilgrimage.²⁰⁵ Moving eastward, Shardza first visited Khyungpo, an area with a strong Bönpo contingent. Here he met and received monastic vows for the second time, as mentioned earlier, from Metön Nyima Gyaltsen (*me ton nyi ma rgyal tshan*) at the monastic seat of the Khyung lineage. It was at this point that he met the important treasure-revealer

²⁰⁴ Personal communication from HH Lungtok Tenpé Nyima, 2000.

²⁰⁵ NBT 97.3ff.

Dechen Lingpa at the Karru monastic seat (*dkar ru gdan sa*), from whom he received the influential advice to undertake retreat and the prophetic encouragement described above.

Soon after, Shardza visited the Bönpo holy mountain of Kongpo Bönri, one of the most venerated of all Bönpo 'power places' (*gnas chen*). Despite the fact that Tenpé Gyaltzen consciously chose to produce an outer, exoteric biography of his teacher, his descriptions of Shardza's encounter with sacred places—beginning with Kongpo Bönri—also include an important esoteric dimension. One explanation for this stems from the fact that people of different spiritual training and capability are understood to experience these power places differently. Thus, it is entirely normal for advanced practitioners to 'read' the landscape in subtle ways, and to report visionary events in these locales. Of course, the nature and extent of such experiences, which are implicitly sanctioned and facilitated by the sacred presence(s) in residence, also signal the special status of a given individual.

After Shardza performed pilgrimage activities such as circumambulation, *maṇḍala* offerings, supplication, prayers and prostrations along with his twenty-five companions, he had a vision while circumambulating near the holy mountain's peak. As he reached the uppermost horizontal trail around the summit, he saw a five-colored rainbow sphere, bright and sparkling, in the center of which appeared the *dharmakāya* buddha Kuntu Zangpo, who appeared dark blue, naked and without any adornments. Tenpé Gyaltzen emphasizes how meaningful this event was, explaining that it arose from the conjunction of blessings from the place and from Shardza's deep faith, and was made possible only through "the clarity of his wisdom eye." Shardza's friends, we are told, asked him what he

saw, for they themselves were able to see the rainbow but not the deity.²⁰⁶ This event thus confirms Shardza's auspicious connection to a traditionally sacred place and suggests his status as an extraordinary pilgrim endowed with special capabilities (*skyes bu dam pa*). In particular, the spontaneous appearance of Kuntu Zangpo—who embodies the unadorned innate nature of the enlightened mind according to the Dzokchen system—portends Shardza's later accomplishments in Great Perfection meditation. Indeed, the direct encounter with the primordial Buddha himself indirectly supports the image of Shardza as a fitting author of instructional texts and treatises in this exalted tradition.

From Kongpo, Shardza traveled westward to Taktsé Yungdrung Ling (*not* the central Tibetan *Drasa* monastery), where he met and received teachings and initiations from the abbot, Yungdrung Wanggyal (*g.yung drung dbang rgyal*). Tenpé Gyaltzen writes that at this time the abbot told Shardza his earlier name of Tashi Gyaltzen held meaning—one might recall it was the refuge name given by his root teacher Ratrul—and the abbot indicated that he should adopt it once again. What is left unsaid is that this presumably involved abandoning the usage of his ordination name, Tenpa Drukdrak, given by the Yungdrung Ling abbot. At this time he also met and received a number of initiations and instructions from a "great lama" belonging to the ancient Bönpo Pa (*spa*) family lineage, Nyima Bumsel (*spa ston chen po nyi ma 'bum gsal*).

Continuing on to central Tibet, Shardza and his companions duly visited each of the three monasteries comprising the Bönpo *Drasa*: Menri, Kharna, and Yungdrung Ling. As will soon become apparent, Shardza's time at the *Drasa* was in no way uneventful, yet one of the most oddly perceptible features of his described visit is the utter absence of

²⁰⁶ NBT 100.3-101.1.

any individual human contact he might have enjoyed. Of course, Shardza was little more than an anonymous member of a touring 'youth group'—hardly a pilgrim of status in a region that drew thousands of visitors each year—but the absence of any personalized relations in his biography still seems conspicuous. Unlike all of Shardza's reported sojourns in the monasteries of Kham, his stopovers in central Tibet resulted in no mention of any particular lamas who provided blessings—let alone instruction, personal advice, or prophecies—nor do his biographies report any conversations he may have had with *geshés* or resident monks from Kham.

It may well be that this state of affairs was not unique to Shardza but rather reflected a typical Bönpo pilgrim's experience in central Tibet, which as a rule undoubtedly would have differed in certain respects from what has been reported of Shardza's experiences in the east. Perhaps high numbers of pilgrims, linguistic difficulties with what easterners call 'Lhasa language,' and stricter monastic protocols conspired to create impersonal dynamics that hindered meaningful relations from developing.²⁰⁷ But for whatever reasons, it appears that during this journey Shardza neither met nor established connections with any particular individuals in the Drasa monasteries. And this point becomes quite significant given that after this brief sojourn, Shardza was not to return to this center of orthodox power for another thirty-eight years. By then, he had already attracted the criticism of Sherap Drakpa and his associates.

Nevertheless, Shardza's visit to Menri—his first stop in central Tibet—is recounted as one of the most meaningful and memorable experiences of his life. Mirroring in

²⁰⁷ HH Luntok Tenpé Gyaltzen, the present Menri abbot, mentioned on one occasion that Menri required guests to take (or re-take) monastic vows if they wished to stay on site for more than three days. Given Menri's isolated location and the utter lack of proximate resources, this rule alone might even suffice to explain apparently transient visits from pilgrims.

important ways his visit to the sacred site of Kongpo Bönri, the account underscores both the sanctity and power of the place itself, Shardza's own high capacity for religious attainment, and, most notably in this case, Shardza's clear karmic links to a potent symbol of the orthodox lineage. The significance of this episode, remarkable from several standpoints, merits its translation in full here from *The String of Wondrous Gems*:

While properly requesting to encounter (*mjal*) holy objects (*rten*) and [sources for merit] accumulation at the site of Palden Tashi Menri—the monastic seat of the Second Victorious One, the great Nyammé [Sherap Gyaltsen]—[Shardza] sought to do whatever he could [to create merit, such as] circumambulating the monastery and [performing] prostrations. In particular, he asked to meet and make offerings to the great, majestic Nyammépa's revered golden throne, which truly shone with a splendor that was renowned as the actual presence of the Bön protectors and [guardian deities], and [he also asked to be brought before] the precious reliquary in which was enshrined a wondrous relic—the size of a bird's egg and sunken in rock—representing his [enlightened] mind.

The magnificent [Shardza] himself said, "I wished that in this life of mine, in accordance with the intention of the master of the teachings, the Peerless Victor [Nyammé], father and sons, that I would thoroughly perfect and bring to completion the full complement of practices associated with the Victorious One's teachings—the Three Trainings and the Two Phases [of Tantric practice]. And I additionally wished that I might be able to do vast work for the Victorious One's teachings, praying single-mindedly. Then, instantly in the dimension within the space in front of the reliquary, in the center of a sphere of rainbow light, the magnificent, peerless lama himself, endowed with the aspects of peacefulness, gentleness and monastic purity, manifested tangibly as a sensory object. The diffusion and concentration of light rays from the sacred site of his body represented an extraordinary sign of blessings.

'May you be a master of the teachings,' he said, and even as he did so, I became accomplished." This [Shardza] said directly to me personally; it is a totally pure, uncontrived conversation.²⁰⁸

This rich passage portrays the young Shardza as far more than an anonymous pilgrim or even an extremely respectful and devoted young man, but rather as no less than a worthy recipient of the personal blessing and authorizing transmission of Menri monastery's founding father. On the one hand, Tenpé Gyaltzen realizes the potential for such a report to provoke incredulity rather than faith, immediately injecting himself into the narrative to stress that he has in no way falsely fabricated a self-serving account. Conversely, we find elsewhere that he is eager to fortify and build upon the astonishing position set forth here, and we find especially bold language in the *Pleasure Garden's* treatment of this momentous event, most notably in its conclusion:

At the monastery of Menri, the pure source of the precious teaching of Shenrap, he met a person residing in a body of light with the attributes of gentleness and chastity—the master of the teachings, the great and magnificent Nyammé [Sherap Gyaltzen] himself. [Shardza] requested a blessing and light rays of three [colors]—white, red and blue—arose from the three places of [Nyammé's] body, (i.e., the head, throat and heart), in a distinct sequence and yet instantaneously, and a definitive understanding that the Four Empowerments had been obtained was born [in Shardza]. Smiling, [Nyammé] gave confirmation [of this, saying]: "Be a master of the completely perfect [teaching] of Sūtra and Tantra!" Thus [Shardza] was empowered as [Nyammé's] special successor (*rgyal mtshab*).²⁰⁹

Beyond the absorbing content of the visions Tenpé Gyaltzen describes, the characterization of Shardza as no less than a living representative, successor or 'regent'

²⁰⁸ NBT 101.6-103.1.

²⁰⁹ PSTS 81.

(*rgyal mtshab*) of the great Nyammé Sherap Gyaltzen appears especially striking, for it represents an obvious challenge to those who would locate Shardza beyond the pale of orthodoxy.²¹⁰ In effect, Tenpé Gyaltzen builds upon the force of Shardza's visionary encounter, decisively preempting any possible arguments about Shardza's lack of mundane qualifications, such as an absence of a monastic degree or well-developed relationships with Drasa leaders. Even more, it offers an unexpected, ironic twist that would allow a sympathetic reader to infer that ultimately Shardza represents authentic Bön tradition even more faithfully than his conservative critics.

Of course, these sort of possible insinuations are hardly explicit, and the remainder of the *Pleasure Garden's* treatment of the subject simply adds further general evidence to underscore Shardza's deep regard for the founder of Menri, alluding to consistent expressions of praise, respect and devotion Shardza offered to Nyammé in various practice manuals and prayer texts he composed for his students and patrons.²¹¹

Not unlike Shardza's experience at Menri, supramundane agents (or 'other-than-human persons') again appear to disclose highly significant karmic connections in the final stop on his early pilgrimage: the monastery of Yungdrung Ling. Given the objections to Shardza that later emerged from this influential institution, the depiction of Yungdrung Ling and Shardza's relationship to it occupy a vital position central to the

²¹⁰ It is interesting to note that Tenpé Gyaltzen finds valuable support for this claim in verses of praise that the Menri abbot, Puntsok Lodrö (*phun tshogs blo gros*), composed for Shardza in 1927. The verses included the line "*rgyal ba'i rgyal tshabs mchog la gsol ba 'debs*," ("I supplicate to the supreme regent of the Victorious One,") with Tenpé Gyaltzen reflecting that the Victorious One may refer both to the Enlightened One and to the 'Second Victor,' the great Nyammé. He then describes, rather cautiously, how this statement merits investigation to see if the meaning truly indicates that Shardza represents a 'regent' of the 'Lord of Menri' (*rje sman ri ba*). cf. NBT 502.2-503.4, esp. 503.3-4.

²¹¹ PSTS 81.

aims of Tenpé Gyaltzen's biographical project. His unique rendering of the experience is therefore reproduced here in full from *The String of Wondrous Gems*:

Shardza traveled on foot to this great Bön place of assembly for future generations that had been predicted, Yungdrung Namgyal Kundrak Ling (g.yung drung nam rgyal kun grags gling), and he passed several days there. Then [one night] a senior monastic elder appeared and spoke to him in verse, saying: "In the future, to be sure, the remnants of your present karma will be here, so to the protectors of Bön, make offerings and prayers [sincere]," and Shardza awoke from sleep. An acute pain then developed in Shardza's right leg. By dawn it was swollen and it was difficult for him to get up. The camp official on this occasion was a man named Paljor who was extremely influential, and he sent Shardza's things ahead with his traveling companions. Incapable of not going even though his leg still hurt, Shardza then went down [from that area].

The party reached a small village that was nearby and Shardza absolutely could not go on. Although they stayed there for three days, Shardza did not improve, so he said: "All of you go back to our area; I myself will stay a few years here in the Drasa and then plan to return to our fatherland." Even though he said this many times, there was no room for discussion at all and no one offered even a word of response. The joyous, heart-felt intention to stay there consistently arose in his mind, but with favorable conditions a little lacking due to karma or fortune, it remained as just that. Later on, having duly performed the tormas-offerings and invocations for the protectors, Shardza made an aspiration in his heart in a truly pure way, saying, "May whatever actions I perform with body, speech and mind, in all of my births beginning with this one, be of benefit to the teachings of the upper and lower Drasa."

The next day his illness had improved slightly, so they journeyed a little. They stayed just a short distance away and gradually it became possible for him to travel. I heard clearly in the words of a few teachers that this was a special sign of the protectors manifestly exhorting Shardza, indicating how if he had stayed there in the Drasa, he would have performed tremendous works

for the teachings in all manner of places everywhere, and that because this did not come to pass, Shardza felt regret in later times.²¹²

This revealing portrayal provides an important framework for understanding the later tumult that principally erupted from Yungdrung Ling, and does so in a manner that might provoke a sympathetic and conciliatory response even from a conservative audience. In the first place, the eventual conflict is both foreshadowed and substantially depersonalized by the broad metaphysical perspective afforded by notions of karma (*las*) and fortune (*skal ba*). Seen in this light, the controversy now appears as an unfortunate, perhaps inevitable result of hidden factors well beyond the events of the present life, and certainly not reducible to narrow sets of issues that may have been debated back and forth. In short, no one individual can be singled out and assigned blame amidst such a complex and opaque backdrop.

In the process of elevating the causes of Shardza's later problems to a remote metaphysical level beyond anyone's control, Tenpé Gyaltzen also offers a very human depiction of his protagonist. The earlier framing rhetoric—introducing and championing Shardza as no less than a 'miraculous manifestation' and a fully-realized being—fades noticeably to the background here, replaced instead with images of humility, frailty, powerlessness, earnestness and regret. While these qualities happen to represent essential religious virtues, they also present a much more understated image, contrasting sharply with the assertive claims made on the basis of Shardza's visionary encounters. Moreover, Shardza's humble, heartfelt aspirations recounted here represent more than general sentiments, expressing instead an explicit and earnest regard for the Drasa's teachings.

²¹² NBT 103.2-105.1.

The reader may also note the account's optimistic intimation that Shardza's karmic relationship with Yungdrung Ling cannot be solely characterized by obstacles, but rather contained the possibility for great religious benefit. Undoubtedly Tenpé Gyaltzen would have his readers move beyond the regrettable circumstances that ultimately led to some estrangement between his teacher and Yungdrung Ling, and consider instead to what degree Shardza may well have fulfilled his wish to benefit the Drasa tradition.

* * *

Shardza's career trajectory as it unfolded during his young adulthood affords a number of insights into the development and the depiction of a Bönpo religious life during this period. Firstly, Shardza's relationships with a bevy of spiritual teachers prominently illustrates the valorization of diversity and inclusiveness, as Tenpé Gyaltzen openly acclaims the seeking and receiving of assorted teachings and transmissions from non-sectarian or *rimé* lamas. And while the presentation aims to achieve a balance between this openness to new influences and a faithfulness to established tradition, the overall impression suggests that it was treasure-revealers like Dechen Lingpa and Kundrol Düdul Lingpa whose advice and example most directly and personally affected Shardza's decision-making, inspiring him toward a life of retreat and relative independence.

Of course, we are also given to understand that certain individuals, like Shardza, held deep-rooted predispositions for a retreat-based lifestyle. This line of thinking might lead one to understand his primary education in esoteric practice as a natural and perfectly appropriate extension of his earliest inclinations. Extensive in nature, drawing upon both New and Old Bön sources, and producing impressive results, such training rendered Shardza fit to be counted, presumably among others, as an heir to the 'Practice Lineage.' Set apart from the more intellectual style associated with the Drasa's 'Exegetical Lineage,'

the religious orientation associated with the Practice Lineage is presented here as a valid, experiential approach to learning and to the religious life. Chapter Six will return to explore further the various rubrics Tenpé Gyaltzen employs to demarcate the religious landscape of the times. For now, one may simply note his substantial efforts to establish the value of Shardza's esoteric credentials, which also involves reassuring his readers that an esoteric emphasis did not lead to extremes. Thus one learns that Shardza was neither foolish nor deluded, continuing to utilize analytical methods and maintain his commitments to morality and monasticism despite his capabilities in Highest Yoga Tantra.

Finally, Shardza's young adulthood allows a reader to gain a sense for the larger world he began to explore in traveling beyond the borders of Dzakhog, a world he would engage as he gradually developed a reputation as an outstanding lama. His pilgrim's journey as a young man, with its visits to holy sites, its ritual exchanges and religious dialogues, its uncertainties and divine interventions, and its moments of hermeneutical significance all prefigure the events of his later career as a prominent Bön lama in eastern Tibet. It is to his depiction in this complex and multifaceted role—as teacher, writer, priest, advisor, dialogue partner and meditation master—that we now turn.

CHAPTER 5

Maturity: Teaching, Writing, Travel and Dialogue

In the previous chapter, the portrait Tenpé Gyaltzen painted of the young Shardza and his formative experiences has been brought into focus. A careful examination of this portrait has revealed a biographical endeavor that combines literary, theological and historiographical elements, all of which explicitly are intended to inspire readers and to persuade the skeptical among them of Shardza's genuine sanctity. At this stage, however, the reader is still left to wonder: How did this promising young student manage to mature into one of the most widely-known and highly-regarded Bön lamas of his day?

The present chapter attempts to offer insight into this process and the circumstances that most directly contributed to Shardza's meteoric rise within the milieu of early twentieth century eastern Tibet. To attempt this requires that we employ an interpretive strategy that takes seriously the text's claim to be, in part, a faithful narrative historiography, one that reveals primary activities and relationships of a remarkable Bönpo living in an extraordinary time. It is my contention here that the biographical narrative at hand indeed aims to be 'faithful' in more than one sense: not only pious with respect to its protagonist, but also true to the task of legitimately rendering past events.

Over the more than forty years that followed the germinal period of his youth, several factors coalesced to solidify Shardza's eventual status as a leader among his generation. Among these, none played a more central role than his proficiency and productivity in writing. In his later adulthood, for instance, one reads that Shardza met a variety of personalities on numerous occasions in eastern Tibet—including *geshés*, *tulkus*, treasure-revealers, and various others—only to find that many were already familiar with his written work. On many such occasions, Shardza's compositions reportedly made a strong positive impression upon this surprising array of well-qualified

readers. He authored at least thirteen volumes of material in total, often traveling with published copies of his works to share and discuss with those whose hospitality he enjoyed.

Nevertheless, if Shardza's writings represent perhaps the most overt and proximate cause for his rise to prominence, they are best understood as part of a religious life that involved a whole host of activities, including teaching, retreat, travel, ritual performance, fund raising, and religious dialogue. The reader will not be surprised to discover, for instance, that the contents of his written works owe a substantial debt to his contemplative experiences, reflecting the kind of strong visionary encounters reported in his young adulthood and taking place within the retreat life for which he was both predisposed and renowned. His life as an author also developed alongside his growing role as a religious teacher, a role which required a certain responsiveness to the needs and specific requests of his students.

Shardza's later career demonstrates an openness to broad religious influences and dialogue that was first indicated by the host of different lamas with whom he reputedly studied in his youth. With his primary sphere of influence clearly centered in the eastern provinces of Kham and, to a lesser extent, Amdo, it is not surprising—given the prevailing trends of the times—to find Shardza developing ongoing relations with a variety of religious figures and potential patrons across sectarian lines. Indeed, he enjoyed collegial relations with a number of Buddhist teachers in Kham; a point Tenpé Gyaltzen celebrates as a testament to Shardza's unbiased view and his widespread prestige. While his political involvements were minimal, he did attract capable patrons to support not only the publication of his works but also construction projects and ritual performances at religious institutions—including Tengchen monastery in his home region—and he also succeeded in marshalling support to formally establish a modest

hermitage. Examined collectively, one gains a better sense for how a regional lama—from a politically weak religious minority, no less—might eventually have etched his name in the memories of more than just a few local supporters. At the same time, of course, one again sees how a skillful disciple has chosen to represent his teacher in a manner both acceptable and inspirational to as many as possible.

Writing, Teaching and Retreat

The String of Wondrous Gems reveals that Shardza first showed an inclination to write when, at the age of twenty, he was deeply moved after reading material on altruistic motivation (*bodhicitta*), considering it to be "a most wonderful teaching."²¹³ Apparently he produced "about one full text on this, but didn't show it to others and kept it hidden."²¹⁴ While this original text was never published, some of its contents were reportedly incorporated into later texts, including his influential and widely-circulated work on the preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*), the *Ati Kalung Gyatso* (*a khrid bka' lung rgya mtsho*).²¹⁵ Besides emphasizing a link between a pure motivation—i.e., the heartfelt concern for the welfare of all sentient beings—and Shardza's first attempt at writing, Tenpé Gyaltzen's account also includes a rumor that the 'old text' was hidden in a fissure in a rock above the hermitage Shardza later established. The importance of this seemingly

²¹³ cf. NBT 86.1ff. Specifically, his experience was based upon reading the *lam rim sum brgya*.

²¹⁴ According to Tenpé Gyaltzen, the text Shardza composed was based upon the *byang sems kyi bshad pa*, was entitled *byang chub sems kyi rnam bshad bde chen lam bzang*, and was later condensed and included within the root verses and commentary known as *sems dba' sdom pa'i rnam bshad la nga bcu rtse dbu pa* (NBT 86.5-6)."

²¹⁵ NBT 87.1ff. This latter text, usually called the *Kalung Gyatso* for short, is well-known among contemporary Bönpos and finds regular use among some communities in eastern Tibet. It was one of the first texts Shardza arranged, which took place when he was thirty-six (1894); at this time, "he thought that a preliminary practice book that was easy to understand and well-suited to the times would be helpful (NBT 183.5)." He examined the different lineages of Bönpo Great Perfection (*a khrid, rdzogs chen* and *snyan rgyud*) including authoritative commentaries (such as *the yang rtse klong chen* and the *bru rgyal ba'i mun sel sgron ma*), and wrote a more detailed explanation of the material presented in the traditional *Ati Thuntsam Chongapa* (*a khrid thun mtshams bco lnga pa*). This text thus became the first of many works designed to refashion older Bönpo material in practical and innovative ways.

off-handed remark should not be overstated, but it does offer tantalizing grounds for conceiving of Shardza's writing as intimately linked to local landscapes and thus akin to treasure (*gter*)—an appealing prospect for at least some of Tenpé Gyaltzen's audience, and an issue to which we shall return.

Following this initial foray into authorship, no further mention is made of any writing Shardza may have done in his early twenties. The esoteric transmission he received at the age of twenty-four from Ratrul, however, marks a sea change in Shardza's relationship to the written word. As mentioned previously, this begins with what is reported as an uncanny ability to understand ostensibly unfamiliar material; or, as Tenpé Gyaltzen puts it, "comprehension of whatever [Shardza] looked at, regardless of scriptural tradition, sprung forth without study."²¹⁶ Tenpé Gyaltzen further remarks that Shardza attributed his ability to discern the meaning of scriptures to the "kindness of his lama," underscoring the sense of blessing (*byin brlabs*) that Shardza felt supporting his scholarship.²¹⁷ Shardza thus began to maintain handwritten notes from the age of twenty-four onwards, which "encapsulated the meaning of many scriptures (*bzhung*) and instructional texts (*gdams pa*)." Extending over a thousand pages in length, these notes reputedly provided the foundation for his most prominent written works, namely, his *Five Treasuries* plus the *The Self-Dawning of the Three Bodies* (*sku gsum rang shar*).

These two cases point to Shardza's own personal inclination and the blessings of his lama, respectively, as primarily responsible for his early writings. However, *The String of Wondrous Gems* soon introduces another factor: the specific requests of others. Of course, attributing the authorship of new texts to others' insistent and heartfelt requests

²¹⁶ NBT 91.6.

²¹⁷ NBT 92.1.

represents a common trope in Tibetan writing, and it may be consciously strategic: it effectively shows the author to be compassionately concerned with others' needs rather than personally assertive (and potentially self-aggrandizing) or unnecessarily innovative. Nevertheless, it remains common practice in a Tibetan religious context for the production of written material—including poems, prayers, instructions and commentaries—to derive from specific requests from students and patrons. The act of writing therefore takes place most frequently within this type of broader social framework, and it finds a close analogue in teaching, an activity that is emically understood to occur through a 'dependently-arisen' conjunction of interests, capabilities, and karmic influences obtaining between teachers and students.

In presenting how Shardza first began to teach—and subsequently to write—Tenpé Gyaltzen conveys a sense of relative informality and spontaneity that seems to have characterized small-scale teaching arrangements on a local scale. He explains:

When Shardza was thirty-two, [the Tengchen abbot] Choktrul Nyima Özer (*mchog sprul nyi ma 'od zer*) and [a prominent lama from the Ra family], Rasé Dawa Drakpa (*bdra sras zla ba grags pa*), were planning a pilgrimage to the *Drasa*. At that time, a lama named Norbu Dargyé (*nor bu dar rgyas*) and two attendants from a new monastery to the south near the place of Bazhab Drakkar (*sba zhabs brag dkar*) requested teachings. Nyima Özer instructed Shardza to give teachings on the preliminary practices to them, and Shardza could not refuse. He taught very well to them, and this was the first time he gave teaching to others. That so-called Bazhab lama later became a yogi free from worldly activity.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ NBT 151.6ff.

This initial attempt at teaching—mainly due to the Tengchen abbot's prior commitments—succeed in earning Shardza a repeat engagement in the following year, when he taught Kundrol Drakpa's *Marmo Dzubtshuk* and the *Ati Tuntsam Chongapa* to the Bazhab lama and his attendants, along with two individuals from Tengchen.²¹⁹ This in turn created a desire on Shardza's part to write a preliminary practice text that would be widely accessible. He thus began writing notes that became the foundation for the *Kalung Gyatso*.²²⁰

From Tenpé Gyaltzen's narrative it would appear that Shardza's reputation as an effective teacher quickly began to spread: when he had finished giving this set of teachings, more than twenty elder monks from his own monastery as well as from the local communities of Zertro Göñ (*zer 'phro dgon*) and Pelzhol Göñ (*'phel zhol dgon*) reportedly requested instruction several times.²²¹ To satisfy them he gave the reading transmission (*lung*) for a broad range of Bönpo texts, presumably offering some exegesis in the process.²²²

Within two years from this time, Shardza's career had taken an important turn as a result of a deepening commitment to the retreat life on the nearby mountain, Yungdrung Lhunpo. At the age of thirty-four, Shardza developed "a genuine experience of disillusionment and renunciation with regard to this life," and once again longed for a more solitary and isolated setting for practice.²²³ Auspicious signs manifested when

²¹⁹ It is interesting to note that these two texts, the *dmar mo mdzub tshugs* and the *a khrid thun mtsams bco lnga pa*, respectively represent what might be classified as 'New Bön' and 'Old Bön' practice guidebooks. Nor was this the only time he taught these two texts together; cf. NBT 212.4.

²²⁰ NBT 152.5-153.2.

²²¹ Tsering Thar locates these two monasteries a short distance to the south of steng chen as well as the shar rdza ri khrod, with zer 'phro housing 20 monks and 'phen zhol 21 circa 1997 (Thar 2002, p. 166, 171).

²²² NBT 153.2ff.

²²³ PSTS 47.

Shardza visited Yungdrung Lhunpo, events which encouraged him to remain in retreat on a remote hillside there, "devoting himself earnestly to the sacred way of life that is free from [worldly] activity."²²⁴ Shardza soon attracted support from the local community to help sustain his retreat endeavors, with local patrons constructing a small retreat house for him and providing basic provisions. In explaining how this came to pass, it is especially interesting to note that *The String of Wondrous Gems* portrays the lifestyle Shardza adopted as a humble, praiseworthy blend of both the monastic and the yogic:

After he had stayed in that isolated place for a few days, faithful sponsors from a town called Rablek (*rab legs*) appeared; they included four groups with many people, and were led by two old men named Peljor (*dpal 'byor*) and Dondrup Tsering (*don grub tshe ring*). They brought flour [for rations] and they said, "We will construct a practice building (*sgrub khang*)."²²⁵ A discussion took place about this.... The people from the town of Repa (*red pa*) said they would bring the wood, and everyone agreed that two stories would do well. Shardza said, "It needn't be a lot of work for so many people. A small renouncer's house is enough for me, where I can sit, sleep, eat and walk around a little." They made him a small house built of stone that was good for sitting and stretching his legs. They asked him to stay there exclusively, and they also asked him for the opportunity to support him with whatever he needed. At that time, they provided enough provisions to live on and things such as the three robes, an alms bowl, and a staff—which are essential for a monk—and things like a *chö* (*gcod*) drum and thigh-bone trumpet (*rgang gling*) that are essential accouterments for a yogi. Thus, Shardza dwelt there with just enough.²²⁵

²²⁴ PSTS 47.

²²⁵ NBT 163.5-164.4.

Once established in his hermitage on Yungdrung Lhunpo, Shardza soon began to assemble a following that included not only sponsors but also disciples, forming the basis for a small practice community. Moreover, it seems as though this particular community attracted attention and held appeal beyond the borders of Dzakhog, for it was not long before two Bönpos from Nyarong (*nyag rong*) arrived to join Shardza's hermitage and become his first students. As Tenpé Gyaltzen explains:

When Shardza was thirty-five, Khöpfung Pema Lodrö (*khod spungs padma blo gros*) and Tsultrim Chokgyal (*tshul khrims mchog rgyal*) from Nyarong arrived in his presence. Having abandoned the things of this life, they had made a promise to stay in an isolated place....They built two small rooms for concentration (*bsam gtan*) [and] Shardza gave them [everything] from Preliminaries to Direct Guidance (*smar khrid*). Remaining there, they were the first students of Shardza.²²⁶

From this point onwards, the retreat setting, characterized by committed esoteric practice and a level of closeness with students, strongly influenced the style and content of Shardza's writing. For example, the full-length biography reports that while practicing *tsalung* daily, Shardza showed signs of change resulting from the movement of subtle 'winds' in his body, which released a spontaneous flow of experiential songs (*nyams mgur*).²²⁷ These impromptu expressions of religious feeling and insight, in keeping with their Great Perfection character, were completely unscripted. While Shardza initially made no effort to record them in writing, he was eventually asked to do so by disciples. These songs thus represent perhaps the earliest instances of written material preserved in

²²⁶ NBT 170.2ff.

²²⁷ NBT 170.5-171.4.

their original form in his collected works, aptly symbolizing the experiential authority that is said to mark much of his literary style.

During these early years at the hermitage on Yungdrung Lhunpo, Shardza's religious career as a whole, as well as his writings, were powerfully shaped by the arrival of Sangngak Lingpa (*bsang sngags gling pa*, b. 1864), a Bönpo treasure-revealer and a contemporary of Shardza who came to Dzakhog in 1901. The throne holder (*bdan sa ba*) of Walkhyung monastery in Nyarong, Sangngak Lingpa was "renowned to all without dispute as a treasure-revealer," and he traveled through a celestial goddess's prophecy to Dzakhog along with his consort, Wanggi Drolma (*dbang gi sgrol ma*), with plans to stay for a few years.²²⁸ The treasure-revealer, his partner and Shardza enjoyed long and engaging conversations, prompting Shardza to show them his preliminary practice text, the *Kalung Gyatso*, after which they expressed a wish to take up and complete the practices it contained. Shardza then honored them as the principle recipients among a large assembly that convened to receive foundational instructions for Bön practice. Afterwards, Sangngak Lingpa reciprocated by bestowing a number of initiations and transmissions—including some deities and texts that crossed sectarian lines such as the Buddhist deity 'Horse-neck' (*rta mgrin*; Skt. *Hayagriva*)—and their collaborations deepened in the months and years that followed.²²⁹

During his time in Dzakhog, Sangngak Lingpa provided Shardza with an intimate entrée into the process of bringing out Mind-treasure (*dgong gter*), a phenomenon that proved to play a significant role in Shardza's later writing. Shardza reportedly had no doubt that Sangngak Lingpa was an authentic treasure-revealer capable of 'checking his

²²⁸ NBT 211.2.

²²⁹ NBT 213.3.

mind' (*dgong brtags*) for treasure, and he requested the *tertön* to help 'open up the site' (*gnas sgo 'byed pa*) of Yungdrung Lhunpo and disclose whatever he could. The *tertön* happily agreed, noting that the time was right, and henceforth undertook a retreat from which he successfully brought out five written volumes of material in a month's time.²³⁰ Tenpé Gyaltzen also describes intimate conversations Sangngak Lingpa and Shardza had about the revelation process. For example, the material objects (such as treasure scrolls) typically recovered from the landscape were explained to serve as a support for the visionary experience of seeing symbolic letters, after which "the meaning of the letters dawns in one's mind and the words well up verbally of their own accord."²³¹

Not long after, in 1904, Sangngak Lingpa disclosed a treasure and clearly discerned that Shardza was the proper 'vessel' for its initial diffusion.²³² The treasure, in Shardza's hands, then became the basis for Shardza's important guidebook, the *Dzokchen Kusum Rangshar* (*The Self-Dawning of the Three Bodies in the Great Perfection*, *rdzogs chen sku gsum rang shar*). Tenpé Gyaltzen explains in detail how Shardza successfully weaved material together in elaborating and completing the text, commenting that as part of the compositional process Shardza "filled in gaps extraordinarily through 'a descent of the word in pure vision' (*dag snang gi bka' babs*)."²³³

In fact, Tenpé Gyaltzen strongly conveys the experiential basis for many of Shardza's better known compositions in several places in *The String of Wondrous Gems*, especially in relationship to the Great Perfection teachings—where a deep, non-conceptual understanding is especially prized. This is strikingly apparent in the account, translated in

²³⁰ NBT 218.3ff.

²³¹ NBT 219.4.

²³² NBT 256.2.

²³³ NBT 257.6.

full below, of how Shardza came to author one of his major works—a two-volume treatise on the view of the Great Perfection known as the *Yingrik Dzö* (*The Treasury of the Expanse and Awareness*, *dbying rig mdzod*). As the reader will note, the genesis of this significant work owes much to Shardza's contemplative mastery, as well as the supportive circumstances provided by teaching and retreat. In the words of Tenpé Gyaltzen:

That year, [1907, when he was forty-eight], Shardza walked to Copper Treasury Practice Cave (*sgrub phug zangs mdzod ma*) at Drakyap Göñ (*brag g.yab dgon*), and together with a few students, he committed to a strict retreat and stayed there. He divided the day into four meditation sessions and stayed in the uncontrived, continuous yoga like the flowing of a river. He made *torma* offerings to the protectors as well as water-*torma* (*chab gtor*) offerings, and offerings of the body (*lus sbying*). Besides simply the guru yoga, he didn't do many kinds of elaborate religious services. In between practice sessions he looked briefly at sections of Great Perfection texts.

On the tenth day of the month at daybreak, Shardza made a heartfelt supplication to the lamas of the Oral Lineage, and in response, an immeasurable, deep faith was born in his heart. As a result, he made a long supplication, a song of lamentation to the lamas. All ordinary appearances then became insubstantial like mist, all conceptions of these ordinary appearances ceased, and he remained for a short while in... the primordially pure natural state. From within that state, from the manifest aspect of the energy of primordial wisdom, he saw directly, in the space of the five [rainbow] lights, the face of the five Buddha-families connected to [the primordial Buddha] Kuntu Zangpo. From their heart-mind, he received the great initiation of the *gyaltab chiluk* (*rgyal thabs spyi blugs*, lit., "the pouring into the crown of all the methods of the Victorious Ones"), as well as the initiation into the energy of primordial awareness (*rig pa rtsal gyi dbang*).

Through the blessings, he had the extraordinary thought that he had perfected realization; this dawned on him, and he independently understood

the deep view and intention of the Great Perfection.... Many words of profound essence concerning the Great Perfection cycle welled up within him, and in particular, he [unlocked the secrets] of the path of the extraordinary esoteric section: for example, the key points of Direct Crossing (*thod rgal*), the profound meaning which came down from the Victor's intention, bound by the symbolic script of the *dākinī*, which most previous scholars couldn't arrive at certainty about. He was again urged on by the songs of the *dākinī*, the owners of the Word (*bka'*), and... he brought the winds into the central channel, unlocking all types of knots in the channels.

He definitively remembered previous lives, and relying on this awakening, he had the power to open up hidden meanings. In this way he wrote the *Zabné Chepé Demik* (*zab gnad 'byed pa'i lde mig, The Key that Opens up the Profound Essential Points*), a small book of scattered notes he put down by hand. Based on that, later in Yungdrung Lhunpo, the isolated place in eastern Dza (*shar rdza*), he definitively arranged the commentary on the meaning of the [Great Perfection] tantras, the *Yingrik Rinpoché Dzö* (*dbyings rig rin po che'i mdzod, The Precious Treasury of the Expanse and Awareness*); he later told me himself that [these experiences] were like a foundation for his writing.²³⁴

In this important passage, textual production results not from ordinary authorial intent, but rather from the intention of the primordial Buddha, Kuntu Zangpo—made accessible through auspicious circumstances, heartfelt devotion, the blessings of lama and lineage, internal yogic transformations achieved in retreat, and extraordinary past-life recollections. The process described here strongly follows the pattern of treasure-revelation—widely popular in eastern Tibet during this period—both in the emphasis on

²³⁴ NBT 274.5-277.3.

non-human agency (most notably the *dākinī*), esoteric perception, and definitive past-life memories.²³⁵ Nor is this the only reported case of such inspired, visionary composition on his part, as similar circumstances precipitate Shardza's production of material for the *Namkha Dzö* (*nam mkha' mdzod*, *The Sky Treasury*), another of his major treatises. In this case one learns that while performing a Tantric transmission at the age of sixty, Shardza saw "from the clear light—the essence of awareness—red letters appearing clearly but which could not be actually read.... The letters dissolved into his mind and from that energy he became confident of the meaning; based on that he arrived at certainty regarding the Tantric cycles known as the *Yangzab Deshek Dupa* (*yang zab bde gshegs 'dus ba*), and he then turned his attention to writing."²³⁶

In both of these extraordinary episodes, Tenpé Gyaltzen's primary concern is not to explicitly establish Shardza as a treasure-revealer, but rather to highlight certain culturally-recognized signs of inspiration that, taken together, signal to readers that Shardza's written work carries special interpretive authority. The uncanny experiences related in these accounts are understood to facilitate a valid, internal conviction about textual meaning that is not normally possible through scholastic interpretation. In effect, Shardza received a kind of inspired confidence that enabled him to transcend ordinary hermeneutical problems. Such a phenomenon first appeared in connection with Shardza's receipt of mind-to-mind transmission from Ratrul, and finds further expression throughout the biographies. For example, Tenpé Gyaltzen's divulges at one point: "I heard [Shardza] tell me in person that on various occasions when some topic came up

²³⁵ One may note that Shardza's reported discussions with Sangngak Lingpa affirmed that it was necessary for a person to have received initiation in a former life to understand the symbolic script that appears in the context of treasure revelation (*sku tshe sngon nas bon la dbang 'byor ba'i gang zag zhig cis kyang dgos pa yin zhes pa*, NBT 220.2).

²³⁶ NBT 360.6-361.5.

that he had uncertainties about, during the day he would pray to his meditational deity (*yi dam*) and many times in his dreams at night his doubts would be resolved."²³⁷

While Tenpé Gyaltzen avoids boldly and categorically asserting Shardza as a treasure-revealer, he does allow for some ambiguity on the question. In fact, some of his comments suggest that such claims were probably made, presumably by some of Shardza's followers in eastern Tibet. Tenpé Gyaltzen writes in the *Pleasure Garden* that Shardza certainly represented someone who 'mastered' or 'held authority over' many profound treasures (*zab gter du ma la dbang ba zhig yin par mngon mod*), insinuating that Shardza's mystical abilities were on par with those of authentic treasure-revealers. In *The String of Wondrous Gems* Tenpé Gyaltzen even confides that Shardza directly spoke about the nature of his mystical experiences in the process of composing the *Namkha Dzö*, at which time Shardza revealed that they appeared to meet the criteria for treasure: "It seems as if what spontaneously and abruptly arose in this way from the energy of genuine, unimpeded awareness is the type of thing that the previous holy ones and the Tantric Nyingmapas have designated as Mind Treasure (*dgong gter*). Accordingly, it is appropriate if one designates this as Mind Treasure.' This he told me directly."²³⁸

Nevertheless, Tenpé Gyaltzen understandably hesitated to categorize any of Shardza's work as 'treasure,' especially in light of the claims from Drasa figures that his teacher embodied 'New Bon' values. In the comprehensive biography Tenpé Gyaltzen promptly adds that Shardza himself understood that characterizations of his work as treasure (*gter*) or pure vision (*dag snang*) should remain undisclosed (*sbas pa'i tshul du bzugs pa*) until a future time. In the shorter, earlier *Pleasure Garden*, Tenpé Gyaltzen makes no reference

²³⁷ NBT135.3-4.

²³⁸ NBT 364.2-3.

to Shardza's own ruminations on this topic, only going so far as to cite a poetic verse from Sangngak Lingpa alluding to Shardza's *Namkha Dzö* as Mind Treasure (*dgong gter*). In this latter text, the biographer immediately afterwards makes a point of strenuously emphasizing that comments on this topic should in no way be taken to indicate that Shardza represented a proponent of New Treasure or New Bon. He writes:

It appears that Shardza was a person who dwelt in the exalted status of a treasure-revealer in this life. When the name treasure-revealer is imputed, bestowed and accepted [with regard to Shardza], it is clearly evident that [what is meant is that] he was a person who mastered many profound treasures.

Reflecting on his having taken responsibility for the general explanation and practice of the teaching, [Shardza] made his principle 'pillar' the continuation of the teaching's life, [which he accomplished] by disseminating the ripening [empowerments], liberating [instructions], and the exegesis associated with the Old Treasure cycles; thus he truly did not give any importance at all to New Bon treasures. He said that nowadays, when the world is full of things that are like treasure but are not [real] treasure, it is very important not to be discouraged about the Victorious One's teachings. He also used to say that if we do not properly establish a foundation through the [different] types of Old Treasure, then a couple of New Bonpos are not going to come along to hold the fort (*sa zin po*); it is evident that he thought refuting [the New Bonpos] was a necessary goal.²³⁹

Tenpé Gyaltsen's comments here provide a sharp counterbalance to the portrait that had been slowly developing, one in which Shardza appears as no less than a capable revealer of Mind Treasure. Here he unequivocally conveys that Shardza's remarkable

²³⁹ PSTS 86-87.

esoteric experiences do not place him beyond the pale of orthodox Bön tradition; rather, Shardza remained strongly committed to foundational Bön material and, like his conservative critics, skeptical about new innovations.

Whatever the reality of Shardza's actual attitudes toward the New Treasure phenomenon, for our purposes it is interesting to observe how Tenpé Gyaltzen crafts a presentation that aims to appease and reconcile Bönpo audiences who value rather different religious ideals. A follower of Sangngak Lingpa himself, Tenpé Gyaltzen surely appreciated how many of the faithful throughout Kham would have recognized the ability to receive and disclose new revelation as one of the most amazing and powerful qualities a lama could have, one which confirmed his elevated status from former lives while simultaneously providing a direct means for benefiting sentient beings in the present. Nevertheless, Tenpé Gyaltzen's depiction of Shardza's written exploits strives to do more than demonstrate their special esoteric character; it also aims to establish their scholarly rigor—a point of utmost concern to the Drasa *geshé* who comprised his audience's most critical segment.

Tenpé Gyaltzen primarily undertakes this latter but no less important task in connection with Shardza's exoteric works on doctrine, precepts and history, where a meticulous and well-reasoned analysis makes for a broadly-accepted methodology. For example, Tenpé Gyaltzen's description of Shardza's historical treatise, the *Lekshé Dzö* (*The Treasury of Good Sayings, legs bshad mdzod*), underscores Shardza's scholarly qualifications and illustrates laudable features of the composition, such as clear organization and attention to detail:

At that time, in response to the insistent requests made by myself along with Waltrul Rinpoché Yungdrung Tsultrim Tenzin Wangpo (*dbal sprul rin po che g.yung drung tshul khrims bstan 'dzin dbang po*), in which we asked Shardza to perform the service of composing a comprehensive volume of

religious discourse on the Word (*bka'*) and the Treatises (*bka' brten*) associated with the origins of Yungdrung Bön, he composed the *Treasury of Good Sayings, A Joyful Rain for the Wise* (*legs bshad rin po che'i mdzod dpyod ldan dga' ba'i char*).

In general, it addressed how the precious Yungdrung Bön initially came into being, how traditions developed in the intermediate period, and finally how they spread into individual regions. In particular, Shardza wrote about the genesis of the earlier and later teachings in the land of Tibet; and about precisely how the teachings were disseminated by treasure-revealers who manifested at the time of the teachings' later diffusion. He also composed a catalogue (*dkar chags*) of teachings that arose from them.

Having done so, he brought to completion the explanation of the *Dénö Rinpoché Dzö* (*The Treasure of the Scriptural Collections, sde snod rin po che'i mdzod*) and established a written religious history.... Similarly, he also provided a description of the origins of Bön and a historical analysis of what is inside and outside [the tradition]. Being generally well-versed in the limitless presentations of tenets in the world and the view, meditation, conduct and result of them, it was necessary [for someone] to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit through scripture and reasoning.... In this [degenerate] time it is rare for the nature of Bön to be revealed just as it is.²⁴⁰

Given the dispute that had arisen with Drasa hierarchs by this time, there is a strong likelihood that Shardza was asked to write this work by his followers—including his biographer—as part of a concerted effort at reconciliation and damage control. Indeed, the request to compose this text took place in 1922 when Shardza was sixty-three, and followed shortly after a return to central Tibet. The journey, it should be noted, was

²⁴⁰ NBT 450.4-451.5.

undertaken at the behest of a disciple, "in order to make a connection (*'brel 'jogs bgyi ba*) for gathering the accumulations in the upper and lower Drasa, the root and branch of the 'Miraculous Voice' [Bon] teaching."²⁴¹ During this trip, which took place in the year immediately following Shardza's unfortunate encounter with Sherap Drakpa in Amdo, Shardza paid respects and made offerings—including the formal presentation of a *maṇḍala*—to the Menri abbot, Puntsok Lodrö (*phun tshogs blo gros*).

Thus Shardza became known both for a breadth of reliable scholarship as well as for the experiential knowledge he gained through retreat. As his reputation grew, so, too, did his circle of disciples and patrons, which resulted in the gradual publication of his written works over the course of his career. In a surprising turn of events, Tenpé Gyaltzen later reports that the prestigious Menri abbot examined a copy of Shardza's collected works in 1925—five years after Shardza's final visit—and was favorably impressed. The biography, in fact, reports that the great abbot was amazed (*thugs la ngo mtshar skyes*).²⁴² At the request of one of Shardza's disciples, the abbot penned verses in praise of Shardza's efforts, which Tenpé Gyaltzen's naturally offers as an important piece of evidence to support his contention that Shardza's writing was indeed consistent with traditional Yungdrung Bon. We will return to the Menri abbot's remarks in the following chapter, as we reflect upon on Shardza's legacy.

For now it is sufficient to note that by Shardza's later years, even the upper echelons of the Bonpo religious hierarchy were personally familiar with his writings. Looking back at his earlier days, it is evident that as his career matured, Shardza taught from and circulated his own published collections with increasing frequency. This pattern becomes

²⁴¹ NBT 449.2ff.

²⁴² NBT 502.2ff.

especially clear in the recounting of Shardza's travels and teachings in various parts of eastern Tibet, to which we now turn.

Travel and Sphere of Influence

Shardza undertook his first sustained period of itinerant teaching in his mid-forties, an endeavor precipitated by sectarian violence in his home region of Dzayul. In 1902, what Tenpé Gyaltzen elliptically refers to as a band of 'young Buddhists' (*ban gzhon*)—whom an oral source identified as Gelukpa monks from a neighboring monastery—razed the temple and monks' quarters at Tengchen.²⁴³ While Shardza and his retreat community were not openly threatened by the attacking monks, the region was clearly destabilized and promised to be far less hospitable for Bönpos.²⁴⁴

Appraised by his patrons that the local Buddhists had no quarrel with him, Shardza nonetheless had misgivings about remaining in retreat in the area despite these assurances. In what may have been a less than subtle assertion of local hegemony, the unnamed Buddhist authorities reportedly expressed a willingness to allow Shardza to continue teaching in the area, deigning to grant him a letter to that effect. Shardza,

²⁴³ For discussion of this event, see 233.4-237.4. The additional oral information, which indicated that the Buddhists in question were Geluk, was relayed to me at Menri in exile by Dungri Shedrup Gyaltzen (*gdung ri shes grup rgyal mtshan*), who added that whatever sectarian issues may have been in play were enflamed by the Geluks taking offense at the fact that the Bön monastery, which was stationed higher up on the mountainside, concluded regular expiation rites (*zlog pa*) by tossing effigies down the hill in the direction of the Geluks. (The biography does in fact refer to a dispute between Tengchen and a 'new monastery' (*dgon gsar*), with these two spatially described as 'above and below'.) Tsering Thar, citing a monastic history of the Kandzé (*dkar mdzes*) area, has found that the term Gön Sar (*dgon gsar*) represents the name of this Geluk institution, which he reports was founded by Hor Chöjé Ngawang Puntsok (*hor chos rje ngag dbang phun tshogs*) during the time of the fifth Dalai Lama (Thar 2002, p. 157, n. 392). HH Lungtok Tenpé Nyima mentioned the name of the reactionary Gelukpa figure Pabonka in connection with this event, whose influence may well have instigated or exacerbated the sectarian violence, though it is not presently clear to what extent this may have been so.

²⁴⁴ Some of Shardza's reported comments at this time suggest that local lay patrons (who traditionally patronized Bön institutions and individuals) were forcibly required by the Geluk theocracy to provide support, to wit: "Even among the *saṅgha*, those who have the genuine mind of renunciation are exceedingly rare. In imitation of the former kings who empowered the *saṅgha*, the monastic communities [today] are robbing ordinary householders. Laypeople, feeling fed up, see whatever service they have to do as a tax (NBT 238.1-3)."

however, deeply saddened by the turn of events and suspecting that there would be too many obstacles to maintaining a harmonious practice community, felt it best to leave.

This marks the commencement of Shardza's work as a touring religious teacher, a fundamental pattern that would continue alongside periods of retreat for the better part of two decades. One of his first destinations was Nyarong, an area from which his first disciples had come and from which he would draw significant support for the rest of his life. Now age forty-five, he began accepting invitations to visit a number of small Bönpo monasteries throughout the area, including places such as Gyalzhing Gompa (*rgyal zhing dgon pa*) and Gonggyal Gompa (*gong rgyal dgon pa*), where he taught basic Dzokchen practice—according to the Drasa system, Tenpé Gyaltzen tells us (based on Dru Gyalwa Yungdrung's *Ati* material)—as well as his own preliminary practice text, the *Kalung Gyatso*. He received an invitation from the treasure-revealer Sangngak Lingpa during this time, and he also was invited to Yeshé Gön (*ye shes dgon*) by two disciples who had a hermitage in the area, with whom he stayed in retreat through the winter. At the time of the Tibetan new year in 1904, Shardza's popularity had grown to the extent that a large audience assembled for teachings on the preliminary practices he offered for one month, "headed by lamas and *tulkus* from such places as Khöpung (*khod spung*) and Khyungpo (*khyung po*), and including representatives of more than 100 monastic residences, local nobility, and many lamas and laymen."²⁴⁵

This in turn provided a venue for Shardza to exert some influence in public affairs on behalf of his home monastery. In particular, he related the unfortunate events which had taken place at Tengchen to a local leader from Gyazzhiding (*rgyar zhis lding*) named

²⁴⁵ NBT 243.3-6.

Amgön and a certain Tranor from Chugo (*chu sgo*). These men in turn approached the Nyarong regional government chief, Sögyal (*bsod rgyal*), who provided personal assurances that the monastery would be restored.²⁴⁶ Later Shardza and his disciples held discussions, and joined with various monastic and lay officials in the Nyarong region (*nyag yul*) to request an audience with the seat of government (*gzhung sa*).²⁴⁷

Within a year of this meeting, the governor (*spyi khyab*) had taken up the Bonpos' cause, informing and petitioning the central government administration (*gong sa thams chad*), after which a special edict was issued proclaiming the need for assistance in re-establishing the monastery in its original place.²⁴⁸ The restoration work was completed in 1908, and Tenpé Gyaltzen credits the thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thubden Gyatso, for laying the foundation for the monastery's renewed establishment.²⁴⁹ Shardza's interventions in this context represent the only real instances of political activity reported during his life—and even here it is difficult to assess the extent of his influence, which may ultimately have been rather minimal. Nonetheless, the episode does suggest a growing prominence Shardza enjoyed among regional Bönpo, as well as an ability to handle himself among officials of some rank.

Beyond Nyarong, Shardza traveled throughout a number of regions in eastern Tibet, including upper and lower Hor, Degé, and Bönpo enclaves in Amdo such as Ngawa (*rna ba*) and the eastern valleys (*shar rong phyogs*) including the kingdom of Trochen (*khro chen*) as well as various monasteries in Gyarong (*rgyal rong*). It is fair to say that, taken

²⁴⁶ NBT 244.1-4.

²⁴⁷ NBT 272.4ff. The diplomatic channels pursued here are not entirely explicit. Those named directly only include local Nyarong officials, such as a certain officer named Ata (*nyag rong lding dpon a rta*), though it seems from what follows that officials of the Ganden Podrang in Lhasa were eventually petitioned on this matter.

²⁴⁸ NBT 272.4-273.4.

²⁴⁹ NBT 319.3.

together, these areas constituted Shardza's sphere of greatest influence, though by the end of his life his writings and renown had attracted students from as far away as Dolpo in western Nepal.²⁵⁰ Shardza of course was also well-known in the Drasa—if not universally admired—and, as mentioned above, he undertook a second journey to central Tibet at the age of sixty-three after accepting an invitation from his supporters in Khyungpo.²⁵¹

In the intervening years of Shardza's life—comprised of roughly two decades extending from the destruction of Tenchen in his mid-forties to his return to a more sedentary life in his hermitage in his mid-sixties—the *String of Wondrous Gems* describes in voluminous detail a whole host of regional destinations and personalities Shardza encountered and an equal bevy of religious activities he performed in each area. While the vast specifics documented in these pages nearly defy analysis, certain basic patterns emerge from which one may draw some useful conclusions.

Firstly, one may note that Shardza's prestige was implicitly confirmed and enhanced by his public persona as a religious teacher on tour. Not unlike the attention garnered by contemporary celebrities and political candidates who travel their respective circuits galvanizing fans and supporters, Shardza gained greater renown and resources as a function of his itinerant journeys around eastern Tibet. While he may have left Dzayul for Nyarong as little more than a refugee fleeing religious and political instability, by the end of this period of touring and travel it was often typical for him to be received in a new area in grand style. Greeted by a row of monks and laypersons lined up with offering scarves and treated to incense and musical accompaniment, he would be respectfully

²⁵⁰ For example, Yangtön Tenzin Gyaltsen (*yang ston bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan*), cf. NBT 551.6ff.

²⁵¹ NBT 449.2.

conducted to the throne to take his place as a revered high lama.²⁵² Such public displays, which were not reported in his home region earlier in his career, contributed to the accumulation of a certain amount of wealth and prestige appropriate for a visiting dignitary, certainly at a level beyond what one would have expected had he otherwise remained in the less conspicuous role of a hermit.

In a second and related development, Shardza's journeys provided new and diverse audiences, contributing to his breadth as a teacher, to his readership as an author, and to his legion of sponsors. It was common, for example, for Shardza to teach publicly on the preliminary practices and to encourage the laity in various places to recite essential Bön mantras, practice virtue, and accumulate merit through traditional practices such as buying and freeing animals (*tshe thar*). On some occasions, however, he was also asked to perform Tantric rites as a potent lama—such as spiritually protecting and bringing an area under control through *yidam* invocation and practice.²⁵³ Occasionally during his travels, such as when he was in the vicinity of Minub (*mi nub*) monastery in Nyarong at the age of forty-six, he was also asked to write commandment letters (*bka' yig*), which aimed to pacify bloodthirsty landlord spirits (*sa bdag*) to whom the local populace had developed the bad habit of offering animal sacrifices (*dmar mchod*).²⁵⁴

In describing Shardza's success in this ritual endeavor—evidently no spiritual disturbances were reported afterwards—Tenpé Gyaltzen comments on how such work attracted donations, which Shardza then scrupulously channeled to support his publication projects:

²⁵² For example, the description of his reception at the kingdom of Trochen (*khro chen*) when he arrived at the age of 62, NBT 397.3ff.

²⁵³ Typically the wrathful deity Walphur Nakpo (*dbal phur nag po*) appears as his chosen deity in this regard.

²⁵⁴ NBT 265.6ff.

Wherever he went in the region, Shardza dwelt only as one free from worldly activity (*bya bral*); thus, he absolutely did not, through selfish grasping (*bdag 'dzin*), aim to accumulate wealth and property. However, students, sponsors and affluent individuals gave a great amount of material things, and despite whatever worldly requests they made with feigned reverence, Shardza accepted [their offerings], considering that it was for the greatness of Bön. Conversely he absolutely did not behave like those charlatans who cover their nose with their sleeve and [pretentiously] say, "I don't accept material things." As for the things [offered] on this occasion, he immediately dispatched them to an adviser, who had them sent as resources for the woodcarvers [who were preparing blocks for Shardza's publications].²⁵⁵

Tenpé Gyaltsen's careful characterization aside, Shardza secured substantial resources during his travels that he sought to put to good use, which prominently involved the financing of his publications. Moreover, he continued to teach from his own compositions throughout his journeys, and in so doing reinforced the interest and gathered the support that allowed his works to circulate as broadly as they did. Eventually, Shardza could count the rulers of several regional principalities in eastern Tibet among his donors. The evidence suggests, however, that no one was more important as a supporter during his career's initial ascent than his own peer and colleague, the treasure-revealer Sangngak Lingpa.

Noteworthy and Influential Patrons

One may recall that as a youth Shardza enjoyed no special connections with wealthy or powerful individuals, and nothing about his family or social status would seem to have

²⁵⁵ NBT 268.2-5.

left him well-positioned for great success. One might further add—though of course we are relying upon his disciple's well-crafted depiction—that Shardza did not appear in the early part of his career to be either motivated or savvy enough to secure patronage beyond the local contributions that sufficed to sustain him in his modest hermitage. This all changed, however, with the arrival of the charismatic Sangngak Lingpa in Dzakhog. At this time Shardza was forty-two years of age and on the cusp of becoming a regional lama of some renown, at least as a capable teacher. As noted above, the two lamas enjoyed a warm reciprocity—they were essentially peers, with Sangngak Lingpa five years Shardza's junior—and in the course of their time together they mutually exchanged initiations and teachings, through which the treasure-revealer reputedly benefited from Shardza's deeper familiarity with the time-honored Long Lineage (*ring brgyud*)—the texts and rituals taught by the Drasa—while Shardza received numerous initiations from the *tertön* associated with the so-called Proximate Lineage (*nye brgyud*), material understood to be of potent but closer or more recent origin.

Given their esoteric exchanges, one in which they each alternated in the role of teacher and student, there is no question that the relationship between these two figures extended well beyond one of mere patronage. Nevertheless, Sangngak Lingpa also proved to be Shardza's most vital supporter at this critical juncture. During his extended stay in Dzakhog, the respected *tertön* intervened with Tenchen authorities on Shardza's behalf, recommending that the hermit remain independent of the nearby monastery—which was seen as sagely advice following its destruction not long afterwards. He also strongly urged Shardza to begin publishing his work. Shortly before leaving Dzakhog in 1902, he enjoined Shardza to assume a greater role in disseminating written teachings, and he made specific predictions about the *Kalung Gyatso*, reportedly saying, "If your words are arranged for publication, they will spread from a single source to many. So,

this is extremely important, and if you arrange this guidebook on the preliminaries for publication now, there is a very clear indication that it will be greatly beneficial for all disciples, greater and lesser. So you should make up your mind [to do this]."²⁵⁶

Tenpé Gyaltzen tells us that Shardza responded to this advice with genuine misgivings about whether he could effectively manage such an undertaking, given his lack of means and experience. However, he was given assurances by the discerning *tertön* that, if only he would make the attempt and keep his aspirations in mind, there were esoteric signs for success (*rtags mtshan*). Not long after, we are told that Sangngak Lingpa and his entourage encountered a woodcarver while traveling through Degé, an individual whom he perceived to have an auspicious connection to Shardza.²⁵⁷ As a result, the *tertön* encouraged the man to perform the work of carving blocks for Shardza's practice manual as an act of religious service, later providing resources from his own estate to finance the publication. In fact, a team of woodcarvers took up residence at Sangngak Lingpa's own Walkyung monastery (*dbal khyung dgon*) and worked to produce several volumes of Shardza's writing over the next several years.²⁵⁸ In light of this strong support, it also stands to reason that the notable *tertön*'s high opinion of Shardza also helped facilitate the warm reception Shardza received when he left Dzakhog for Nyarong a short time later.

During Shardza's travels over the next two decades, his reputation grew substantially, and he would eventually accept invitations from a number of ruling aristocratic families in various principalities, enjoying patronage from royal houses in places such as Trochen

²⁵⁶ NBT 227.5-228.1.

²⁵⁷ NBT 228.4; 241.2. Sangngak Lingpa came across this individual, Wangchuk (*dbang phyug*), in Degé Kusewa (*ku se ba*).

²⁵⁸ NBT 227.4-228.3; 241.2-5; 247.6.

(*khro chen*), Drateng (*brag steng*), Geshé (*dge bshes*), and Lingsang (*gling tshang*).²⁵⁹ In these settings Shardza typically performed for his royal patrons the services one would expect of a reputable lama. These services included public rituals to benefit the royal family and their subjects, such as healing rites (*sku tshe'i rim gro*), longevity empowerments (*tshe dbang*) and other restorative practices (e.g. *tshe 'gugs*, 'recalling vitality').²⁶⁰ In at least some cases, most notably during his stay in the royal house of Trochen, Shardza and the king and queen developed a close and meaningful relationship said to embody the 'patron-priest' (*mchod yon*) ideal. For example, after he performed a variety of public ceremonies as a guest of the king and queen in 1920, Shardza gave detailed personal tutoring to his regal hosts, consisting of a complete and sequential introduction to esoteric teaching. The subject matter covered included guidance on the meditations associated with the preliminaries (*sngon 'gro*); instruction in calm abiding, selflessness and emptiness which constituted esoteric 'introduction' (*ngo sprod*); the pointing-out instruction that represented the foundation (*dngos gzhi*) for Ati Dzokchen practice; and personal advice about how to proceed with visualization and recitation within *vidam* deity practice.²⁶¹

While Shardza may have acquired added prestige through patronage relationships with provincial leaders—a point implicitly reinforced by Tenpé Gyaltzen—this does not seem to have led to more significant involvement with larger political forces or intrigue.

²⁵⁹ Tsering Thar mentions that the first three of these belong to the "traditional Eighteen Kingdoms of Gyalrong (*rgyal rong*).\" He then provides modern locations for these areas, reporting that Trochen or Trokyap (*khro skyabs*) is located in Kyomo (*kyo mo*) Township, Chuchen (*chu chen*) County, Ngawa (*rnga pa*) Prefecture; Drateng may be found in Drateng (*brag steng*) Township, Rongdrak (*rong brag*) County, Kandzé (*dkar mdzes*) Prefecture; and Geshé is situated in Geshetsa (*dge shes rtsa*) Township in the same county and prefecture as the previous (Thar 2002, p. 158, n. 400).

²⁶⁰ e.g., NBT 392.2ff.

²⁶¹ NBT 400.1-6.

Of course, it is possible that the dearth of such material may reflect Tenpé Gyaltzen's editorial sensibilities; after all, Shardza's biographer might have deemed political machinations of any sort unseemly in the context of an ideal religious life. More likely, however, is that Shardza and his occasional aristocratic patrons found themselves operating in relative autonomy on the political margins, from where they would intermittently be pulled into the orbit of larger political forces (what Samuel has called, after Tambiah, 'galactic polities') that successively emanated from China, central Tibet, or at times from regional centers like Degé.

Thus, despite the presence of a handful of royal patrons, the biography reports virtually nothing about any role Shardza might have played in political affairs beyond a few conversations concerning the razing of Tengchen monastery and Shardza's limited intercession with the Nyarong regional government on its behalf. This largely apolitical portrait seems plausible not only in light of the geo-political circumstances of the eastern borderlands and Shardza's minority status as a Bönpo, but also because Shardza never acted as an abbot or an administrator of a monastic institution of any real economic or political consequence. Moreover, Tenpé Gyaltzen's reporting style suggests that he was certainly prepared to note any cordial receptions Shardza might have received from important regional dignitaries, whether religious or political, however fleeting these encounters may have been.

There is, however, one exceptional instance in which one finds Shardza providing general advice for someone in a position of at least provisional power. During his visit to the Trochen principality, Shardza composed at the king's request a letter of counsel for

posterity, which offered broad counsel on how to rule.²⁶² On this one occasion, Shardza recommends a political style that is discreet, unassuming and pragmatic. Concluding his letter to the monarch, he warns of the potential for sweeping regional developments to engulf his relatively small-scale patrons, and, in light of this threat, he advocates a policy of restraint, non-confrontation, and self-preservation.²⁶³

While Shardza's comments betray a certain level of awareness with respect to regional affairs, for our purposes what are most interesting are some of his particular remarks to the king on religion. In fact, Shardza's counsel combines religious injunctions—such as contemplating impermanence, the reality of future lives, and altruistic motivation—with more secular recommendations promoting fair governance on a local scale. In general, his advice focused on such royal virtues as avoiding excessive punishment for crimes, liberally supporting religious institutions and their activities, and championing spiritual practice among the populace. However, he also adds some telling comments on the status of religious figures—both Bön and Buddhist.

Shardza frames the topic of proper royal treatment of religious persons first by recommending that one, as a rule, ought to avoid insulting lamas or monks, just as one would, as a matter of course, act respectfully towards religious representations (*rten*) such as statues. He even underscores this point by saying: "Generate pure perception even for those with a yellow form (*ser gzugs*, i.e., those dressed as monks)."²⁶⁴ However, he

²⁶² NBT 401.2-412.2.

²⁶³ Concluding his remarks, Shardza writes: "Especially nowadays, there is great strife between China and Tibet. Sentient beings are unhappy; there is pestilence, famine and war spreading. Kings are opposed by common people and the place of royalty is held by the subjects. In the end, foreign people will suffuse the upper and lower regions of Tibet. In these bad times, one's own mind must remain stable.... In this time when there is conflict between China and Tibet, if one challenges the powers that be, one will lose. Acting with skill and knowledge, pay homage and protect one's own kingdom (NBT 410.6-411.4)."

²⁶⁴ NBT 406.6.

quickly goes on to describe the need for firm control over ignorant, hypocritical and unrepentant individuals who, "abandoning their robes like a snake his skin," involve themselves in nefarious affairs like womanizing and money lending.²⁶⁵ Shardza notes the king's unique and important position of authority as regards the clergy, recommending in a revealing statement that he forcefully reform all Bönpo monastic communities (*dgon sde kun*) under his jurisdiction to conform with "the pure Menri system (*bkra shis sman ri'i lugs bzang*)."²⁶⁶

This generally conservative, reformist approach to religious communities notwithstanding, Shardza proceeds to speak more liberally when discussing how the king might respond to religious diversity among his subjects. In Shardza's view, communities of Bönpo and Buddhist laypersons living under the king's law each would be free (and encouraged) to carry out their own respective practices, in accord with their own textual traditions.²⁶⁷ His vision would find both communities taking part in similar religious activities, such as reciting refuge prayers, making clay *satsa* (*saattsha*) images on behalf of the dead, participating in community fasts (*smyungs gnas*), buying and releasing animals (*tshe thar*), performing circumambulatory prostration circuits (*phyag bskor*), and reciting principle mantras. He thus recommends shared traditions of lay practice that seem intended to foster a spirit of religious pluralism within the kingdom, but nonetheless stop short of syncretism. To illustrate this, Shardza mentions how Bönpos would recite their own principle mantras—the 'Matri' and 'Akar' mantras and that connected with Chamma (*byams ma*), "The Loving Goddess"—while their Buddhist counterparts would

²⁶⁵ NBT 407.3-5.

²⁶⁶ NBT 407.5-408.1

²⁶⁷ NBT 408.4-6. rang sde bon chos rang shog so so nas/... rgyal po'i khrims bzhin sde bas 'gal mi bya.

do likewise, reciting the 'Mani' mantra and the 'Siddhi' (connected with Padmasambhava) as well as that of the goddess Tara (*sgrol ma*), "The Savioress."

Shardza's recognition of commonalities between Bön and Buddhist traditions and the spirit of accommodation he advocates in this formal letter point to the ecumenical or *rimé* orientations for which he has become well known. During his adult career, Shardza's travels created numerous opportunities for fruitful religious dialogue, including with representatives of several major Buddhist lineages. Let us now examine Tenpé Gyaltzen's depiction of these intriguing and potentially crucial historical and theological relationships.

Ecumenical Relations

Undoubtedly one of the most fascinating elements of Shardza's career involves his relationships with leading non-sectarian Buddhist figures. Tenpé Gyaltzen's treatment of this dimension of Shardza's life promises to reveal key nuances of Bönpo attitudes toward *rimé* figures in Kham, and to offer some useful grounds for understanding how different collaborations among particular lineages may have unfolded.

The reader may recall how, from early on in the biography, Tenpé Gyaltzen commented favorably on Shardza's non-partisan orientations as a young student, which were aptly illustrated by Shardza's receipt of bodhisattva vows from the Buddhist hermit Dechen Özer and his deep reverence for the non-sectarian treasure-revealer, Dechen Lingpa, whom he counted among his primary teachers. Of course, we have also observed how Tenpé Gyaltzen strives to moderate his celebration of such influences with consistent reference to Shardza's fidelity to Drasa tradition. Nevertheless, as will become clear below, it is evident that, for Tenpé Gyaltzen, Shardza's reputation was enhanced by recounting numerous examples of convivial relations Shardza enjoyed with Buddhist

lamas. These inclusions also suggest an important and perhaps substantial segment of readership that also would have positively valued such reports.

The accounts Tenpé Gyaltzen provides of encouraging contacts with Buddhist lamas—or, in some cases, their disciples—collectively attempt to show that Shardza's writings not only found an audience among a number of the day's leading Buddhist masters, but also that, as a result, Shardza himself enjoyed a measure of respect and prestige among them. Tenpé Gyaltzen's treatment of these inter-religious relationships draws upon both the universal renown of certain individual Buddhists who are briefly named, as well as upon the description of a certain number of more sustained encounters that were pursued in some depth.

One of the earliest reports of the former type arose when Shardza was still living in Dzakhog and, at the age of thirty-six, sent a letter and an offering scarf to none other than the famous *rimé* lama Jamgön Kongtrul (*'jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas*, 1813-1899), who would have been eighty-two at the time. Kongtrul, originally from a Bönpo family himself, apparently responded with friendly verses that described Shardza as a 'relative' (*gnyen*), and showed support for Shardza's aspirations and his Bön heritage. Tenpé Gyaltzen duly describes the occasion of this important of correspondence and reproduces the full text of Kongtrul's response. Kongtrul's reply provides an example of the kind of literary exchanges that took place within learned, religious circles, and it reveals a tolerant, non-sectarian approach that was undoubtedly appreciated by Shardza and his disciple-biographer.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸Given Kongtrul's great renown and influence, as well as the importance of the subject matter, I have rendered episode in full as follows:

"At that time, Lama Tsul Chok (*bla ma tshul mchog*) from Nyarong and Padma Lodrö (*padma blo dros*) were going to see Degé Lama Kongtrul Rinpoche Yönten Gyatso (*sde dge bla ma kong sprul rin po che*)

Contained within Kongtrul's expression of poetic goodwill lie certain elements of a basic groundwork for inter-sectarian dialogue, one that is founded upon common

yon tan rgya mtsho). Shardza offered with great regard an extensive letter together with a ceremonial scarf, and presented the paper [to the couriers] with its seal intact. In such a way did [the following] letter arrive [in reply]:

'A relative has prepared a place for the ocean of Early Translation teachings,
Truly causing the rain to fall from the clouds of the authentic Miraculous Voice [that is Bon],
And so producing the harvest of fortunate ones' welfare and happiness.
I issue a reply with humility to the presence
Of one with the talents of a trustworthy guide.

The Victorious Ones have compassionately appeared without ceasing,
And so shine forth in response to whomever yearns to be trained.
Yungdrung Bön, which has arisen in this way,
For a long time here in the snowy mountain ranges of Tibet,
Has been widely proclaimed [mnyam chags?] as the teaching of the Victor Shenrap.

Although the expressions 'Buddhism (*chos*)' and 'Bön (*bon*)' are different,
They are of one nature in their methods for training disciples.
The continuity of a river that descends into different valleys
Is not separable in the great ocean.

Just so, these days Bön teachings are drying up;
These are times in which the inferior float along.
You alone look to bring about the teaching's restoration.
This old monk in the Buddhist monastic seat [says]
May truly festive joy grow in the regions of Bön.

Relying upon the enlightened activity of upholding, preserving and spreading
the precious teachings of the Victorious One wherever they may be;
serving the welfare of those difficult to train in degenerate times;
These are the deeds of holy beings.

Through the Causal, Resultant and Unsurpassed Vehicles—the nine stages;
The Four Portals and the Five Treasuries—the triad of outer, inner and secret;
Teaching, practice and [ritual] action—the array of enlightened activities;
Generate the spiritual power that gloriously diffuses amidst disciples.

Just like the tree that fulfills the wishes of the Three Secrets [of body, speech and mind] of anyone,
Or the shady, cool mountain slope that grants all that is desirable for others' welfare,
with a hundred gods of good fortune fully bowing down [and offering themselves],
May you always be a beautiful ornament for Shenrap's teaching.

Although there may be differences in such and such a proposition,
Those who emphatically proclaim the Teacher's three bodies,
See them become one taste in the practice of awakening.
May disputes totally subside and dissolve in pure perception.

The practitioner of virtue Karma Ngawang Lodrö Thayé,
Who has seen and heard the scriptures and long-standing traditions of Bon—such auspiciously coincident
things touched by virtuous deities—so offers this [letter]." (NBT 181.2-183.1).

methods for training disciples and in the experiences and 'pure perceptions' (*dag snang*) arising through esoteric practice. Although this friendly missive appears to represent the extent of Shardza's relationship with the elderly Kongtrul, Shardza received similar literary dispatches from other prestigious Buddhist figures over the course of his career, and in several noteworthy cases, a deeper relationship was established.

In his later years, for example, Shardza received complimentary communiqué from such luminaries as Kahtok Situ Chökyi Gyatso (1880-1925); a certain hermit known as Dri Jamyang Drakpa, identified as a close disciple of the famous Ju Mipham (1846-1912); the Amdo geshé Jampel Rolpé Lodrö (1888-1944) who described himself as a disciple of "the all-knowing Jamyang Lama in the tradition of Je Tsongkhapa;" and a Nyingma Tantric practitioner from Dzokchen Monastery named Wangchuk Zhönnu.²⁶⁹

Most of this correspondence directly resulted from the circulation of Shardza's writings. Tenpé Gyaltsen reports, for example, that at the time Shardza received verses from Wangchuk Zhönnu at the age of sixty-five, thirteen volumes of his collected works had been successfully published and circulated. In some cases, his writings had an especially profound effect upon their Buddhist readers. The biography reports, for instance, a certain Lhazo Lama Rinzin (*lha bzo bla ma rig 'dzin*) from Bachak hermitage in upper Nyarong (*nyag stod sba lcags ri khrod*)—described as a direct disciple of the

²⁶⁹ For verses from Kahtok Situ Chökyi Gyatso (*kah thog si tu chos kyi rgya mtsho*, 1880-1925), see NBT 379.4ff. For brief mention of encounters between Shardza's disciples and Dri Jamyang Drakpa (*'bri 'jam dbyangs grags pa*), a student of Mipham Jampel Namgyal (*mi pham 'jam dpal rnam rgyal*—i.e., *'jam byangs rnam gyal rgya mtsho* or *'jam dpal gyes pa'i rdo rje*, 1846-1912), which resulted in supplicatory verses to Shardza, see NBT 380.6ff. The Gelukpa figure named here, Jampel Rolpé Lodrö (*a mdo dge bshe 'jam dpal rol pa'i blo gros*), was a geshé from Tashi Gomang (*bkra shis sgo mang*) in Amdo who wrote complimentary verses to Shardza, reproduced in the biography, along with a request to 'encounter whatever he could of Shardza's works (*rje bla ma'i gsungs gang yod mjal gnang dgos*). cf. NBT 465.2ff. The Nyingma Tantric priest (*sngags btsun*) Wangchuk Zhönnu (*dbang phyug gzhon nu*), from the important Nyingma seat in the Rudam valley in Degé province (*rdzogs chen o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling*) also sent a laudatory poem to Shardza when the latter was sixty-five (NBT 467.3ff).

famous Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo—sending offerings along with a heartfelt letter because of experiences he had in connection with Shardza's works. Tenpé Gyaltzen presents this unusual scenario, which occurred when Shardza was sixty-one, as follows:

There was a famous learned and accomplished one named Lhazo Lama Rinzin from Bachak hermitage in upper Nyarong who was a face-to-face disciple of masters such as Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo. He offered a letter to Shardza, which read:

"To the lotus feet of the supreme, great being from Shardza, the guide for beings in the Land of Snow who elucidates the Miraculously-Spoken Teachings [of Bon], I prostrate and respectfully write with a request. While I have been pretending to strive in the essential practice here in a solitary place, I had a chance to look in detail at a few texts I obtained from your collected works, such as the Yingrik Dzö (*dbying rig mdzod*). Having done so, at daybreak an extraordinary, definitive awareness arose amidst a state that was like attaining [the stage of] warmth (*drod*) in my meditative experience and realization. In the midst of this experience, I met a small noble one garbed in stainless white garments who seemed to be the Lord of Beings, Tsewang Rinzin, and signs of his blessing arose. Ever since I've felt deep respect and devotion and harbored a great hope to meet the lama [Shardza] and to take these teachings (*chos*) into my experience.

However, for the time being I am under a powerful command with a strong pledge not to turn back on this staircase. Thus, since it is certainly clear that you yourself, the precious holy lord, are an emanation of Tsewang Rinzin, I beg you a hundred times to take me as a disciple with your wisdom body, regardless of whether I am near or far, and I would add the prayerful request that you permit me to remain under your protection in all of my lifetimes."

Along with these words, offerings of a ceremonial scarf and silver were received. [Lhazo Lama Rinzin] never met Shardza in person, but if one takes into account what was later said by disciples, one would consider that they brought blessings to one another as teacher and student.²⁷⁰

As meaningful as some of these letters undoubtedly were to their authors and recipients, Shardza's positive relationships with Buddhists were certainly not limited to written correspondence. At the age of forty-four, for example, Shardza shared instruction and commentary at his hermitage in Dzakhog with a certain Dzagyal Pakpa, who is described as a renowned disciple in the tradition of the famous Patrul Rinpoche (1808-1887).²⁷¹ The two lamas reportedly exchanged respectful greetings, engaged in conversations and arrived at mutual understanding; as the biography puts it, "their inner heart-minds combined as one (*thugs nang gcig 'dres su gyur*)." Shardza offered guidance on Bön material related to the Stages of the Path and to Dzokchen initiation, receiving in turn material on the *bodhisattva* precepts and the lives of the Indian *mahāsiddhas*.²⁷²

Within two years of this fortuitous meeting and not long after Shardza began his period of travel through Nyarong, he found a warm reception among Buddhists at a place known as Chögyü Phowa Kuk, which had been founded by Nyakla Trulzhik Padma Dūdul (1816-1872).²⁷³ Here he enjoyed further dialogue with a disciple of Padma Dūdul, Yeshé Dorjé, who reportedly "had familiarity with the tenets of both Bön and Buddhism,

²⁷⁰ NBT 377.4-379.1.

²⁷¹ Dzagyal Pakpa (*rdza rgyal 'phags pa*) is described as "a close disciple of the bodhisattva sustaining the lifeways of the famous Kadampa (*bka' gdams pa*) from Dzachukha, Dzogchen Patrul Rinpoche," (i.e., *rdza dpal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po*).

²⁷² NBT 217.3ff.

²⁷³ According to the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center's information, nyag bla padma bdud 'dul, 1816-1872, is also known as 'khrul zhig gling pa, and his primary seat was known as nyag rong shar rgyal ba skal bzang dgon. It is not immediately apparent whether or not the hermitage named here, *chos brgyud pho ba khug*, was affiliated with this monastery or not.

and was without the attachment and hatred of sectarianism (*phyogs ris*).²⁷⁴ Explaining that the retreatants in residence were focusing on the instruction and mind training associated with the Kadampa and Mahāmudrā traditions as well as Dzokchen, Yeshé Dorjé added that he had encountered several of Shardza's scriptures, which had given rise to experiences that in turn had engendered faith. As a result of their meeting, Shardza was asked to give teachings for more than sixty members of the hermitage, which were reportedly well-received.²⁷⁵ According to Tenpé Gyaltzen, Shardza was very pleased by the nature of the discussions that took place with this audience, feeling that practitioners of experiential mind training (*blo sbyongs nyams su len mkhan*), in spite of their differences, were well-suited to arrive at mutual understanding and appreciation.

A decade later, the comprehensive biography reports a significant experience Shardza had while visiting Dzongsar Gön (*rdzong sar dgon*), the important Sakya monastery in the Degé region that served as the seat of the Khyentsé incarnations. Visiting in 1914, Shardza met the one recognized as the supreme reincarnation or *tulku* (*yang srid gsar pa mchog sprul zhes*), an influential yet unnamed lama who would appear to have been Jamyang Chökyi Lodrö (*'jam dbyangs chos kyi blo gros*, 1893-1959). The night after arriving in the area, Shardza described a dream in which he met a brilliant lama unknown to him, but whom he felt to be Jamyang Khyentsé, who proceeded to advise him. Tenpé Gyaltzen recounts that the lama in the dream encouraged Shardza to set down that which

²⁷⁴ ye shes rdo rje, b. 19th century. NBT 245.2-3.

²⁷⁵ NBT 245.1-247.1. 246.1 According to *The String of Wondrous Gems*, one of the younger students said: "We never had any familiarity with Bön; when I analyze your teaching, the way of expression of Bön and Buddhism is not quite alike, but the meaning comes down to the same thing." An older lama reputedly said: "Some great lamas, like [in] the Kagyü and Geluk [lineages], think this quarrelling between tenet systems is helpful to their doctrine; some have worldly attachment and hatred. On account of that, fools, many of whom parrot hearsay... don't have familiarity with the tenets [of others]."

arose in his mind as the starting point for a teaching, which in the future would be extremely beneficial for Bön.

The following day Shardza and his host reputedly greeted each other with great respect and, having enjoyed extensive and detailed conversations, experienced a genuine meeting of the minds; as in the case above, they "mutually mixed their minds as one (*phan tshun thugs yid gcig 'dres su gyur*)."²⁷⁶ The *tulku* reported having seen quite a few (*mang tsam*) of Shardza's collected works, including the Yingrik Dzö. Although he admits to having little knowledge of Bon tenets, he offers a number of solicitous comments supportive of Bön tradition, and professes a great faith and interest in what "previous lamas from long ago have said is a long-standing, indivisible Bon-Buddhist system of Vairocana (*bon chos dbyer med vai ro'i ring lugs*)."²⁷⁷

Jamyang Chökyi Lodrö further expresses the wish to receive transmission for the empowerments and instructions related to Shardza's collected works—mentioning travel to Dragyap (*grag g.yab*) where Shardza had the esoteric experiences that resulted in the Yingrik Dzö—though it is not clear whether or not this took place. Nevertheless, the encounter strongly suggests that the breadth of several famous non-sectarian lamas' interests extended to Bön sources—partly via the inspirational example of Vairocana—and that Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen received recognition as a worthy dialogue partner and colleague. This is perhaps best illustrated by the *tulku's* decision to share a significant portion of Bön texts housed at Dzongsar with Shardza—texts collected by none other than Kongtrul himself. These treasure texts, attributed to Tséwang Drakpa (alias Dechen Lingpa), were among those that failed to find inclusion in Kongtrul's treasure anthology,

²⁷⁶ NBT 349.5.

²⁷⁷ NBT 349.5-350.2.

the Rinchen Terdzö. The *tulku* kept half and offered half to Shardza, encouraging him to "disseminate them for the welfare of the doctrine and sentient beings."²⁷⁸

As intriguing and unexpected a development as this may be, a skeptical reader might still reasonably wonder how much significance to attach to what may ultimately represent little more than a once-in-a-lifetime encounter with a renowned individual. Yet there remained one major Buddhist figure that consistently appears in Shardza life, and as more than a polite acquaintance or a distant colleague: the prominent Geluk *tulku* from Hor Drakkar, Losang Palden Tenzin Nyendrak (*hor brag dkar sprul sku blo bzang dpal ldan bstan 'dzin snyan grags*, 1866-1928). Indeed, Shardza enjoyed a truly sustained relationship over time with this eclectic lama, the reincarnate throne-holder of Drakkar monastery in Hor Kandzé (*hor dkar mdzes*) and a well-educated Gelukpa scholar who had spent ten years at Drepung Loseling in central Tibet.

Drakkar Rinpoche first appears in the story in the wood-horse year (1894), when Shardza was thirty-six. At this time, Drakkar administered a monastery that housed 300 novice and fully-ordained monks and about 400 nuns (*rab byung ma*) who "remained according to the life-example of the Kadam (*bka' gdams*) masters of the past."²⁷⁹ Tenpé Gyaltzen recounts that Drakkar had come across "a few really beneficial pieces of advice" that Shardza had written at this young age, which in turn prompted him to send salutary verses praising Shardza and revealing his own rather liberal standpoint. This stance comes across in his concluding verses, where he identifies himself, the composer, as "an

²⁷⁸ NBT 350.2-4.

²⁷⁹ NBT 184.1.

illusory being who cherishes all [teachings] without fixating on any given tenant system (*grub mtha' ma nges kun la gces 'dzin sgyu ma'i skyes bu nga yis smras*).²⁸⁰

Five years later, Shardza had an important dream in which a disembodied voice told him that "the *dharma* of Nagarjuna" was being preached by the supreme *tulku* of Hor Drakkar, leaving Shardza with the unmistakable impression that "this person was not an ordinary being."²⁸¹ The reader then learns that within a year's time (in 1900), Drakkar arrived in Dzakhog and the monks of Tengchen issued a general invitation for him to visit, which he accepted.²⁸² This rather innocuous remark, which receives no further explanation, actually provides important evidence that inter-sectarian hospitality and exchange—here between Bönpo monks and a Gelukpa throne-holder—was not unknown in Shardza's home region of Dzokhog. And as we have seen, similar opportunities were later made available for Shardza among Buddhists in other parts of eastern Tibet.

Because he had "wished to meet Drakkar for a long time," Shardza relaxed the strictness of a retreat he was undertaking, allowing the two of them to enjoy extended conversations. As a result, Shardza showed Drakkar his newly-composed preliminary practice text, the *Kalung Gyatso*, requesting that Drakkar check it for mistakes. Drakkar declined to focus on grammar and composition—dismissing their importance given that the material in question was esoteric instruction (*man ngag*)—but the following day he reported back with surprising dream indicators warning of a serious obstacle the text had attracted. He then proceeded to make recommendations for overcoming the problem (mantra recitation for the Bön deity Dugkar, *gdugs dkar*), and added a prediction that

²⁸⁰ NBT 185.1.

²⁸¹ NBT 201.6.

²⁸² The text reads *de'i mtshams su hor yul nas brag dkar mchog sprul bstan 'dzin snyan grags rin po che rdza khog tu phebs pa'i tshe/ rang dgon sten chen pa'i grwa spyi nas gdan zhus mdzad nas byon byung bas/*

numerous students would benefit from the instruction, including five extraordinary disciples.²⁸³

Drakkar's further advice and support reflected both his advanced scholarly and esoteric training. Though he was slightly junior to Shardza in years, his standing as a well-educated *tulku* and a throne-holder made it appropriate for Shardza to share his meditation experiences with Drakkar—as one might with a respected teacher—after which Drakkar confirmed that Shardza's experiences (*nyams*) and realization (*rtogs*) were consistent with the stages of Sūtra and Tantra. Indeed, he praised Shardza's sincere recounting, adding that "it seems that the way of describing the view in the Bön and Nyingma systems has not been fabricated with sophistic words (*rtog ge'i tshig gis ma bcos pa*)"—perhaps a telling indication of his less-than-orthodox Gelukpa inclinations.²⁸⁴

Nevertheless, Drakkar apparently did emphasize the benefits of training in the analytical meditation of the Mādhyamika system, for which the Geluk tradition is well known. He concluded his stay in Dzakhog by giving an Avalokiteśvara empowerment, an authorization (*rje gnang*) for the Mani recitation, and complementary instruction, and before leaving he personally encouraged Shardza to "open up the holy mountain" (*gnas ri sgo 'byed pa*) upon which Shardza's hermitage had been founded.²⁸⁵ These predictive words were recalled not long after when, with the essential collaboration of the *tertön* Sangngak Lingpa, Shardza did indeed "open up" and retrieve teachings from the sacred landscape of Yungdrung Lhunpo.

Remembering another prophetic encouragement Drakkar had given him, Shardza made arrangements five years later, during his travels in the wake of Tengchen's

²⁸³ NBT 204.1-206.1.

²⁸⁴ NBT 206.2.

²⁸⁵ NBT 206.4-6.

destruction, to travel one time to Gyarong.²⁸⁶ As a result, he traveled from Nyarong to Gyarong Mudo (*rgya rong dmu rdo*) approximately two years later (in the fire-sheep year, 1907), where he and five disciples brought more than a hundred copies of his written texts, including his newly-completed *Kusum Rangshar*. Once in Gyarong, Shardza's personal charisma and the appeal of his written works impressed leading Bönpo officials and established links to good sources of patronage.

On the journey back to Dzakhog, Shardza called on Drakkar at his monastery, here referred to as Hor Drakgo Gön (*hor brag mgo dgon*). On this occasion, prior to his later meetings with officials in Nyarong, Shardza recounted to this "master of the non-sectarian teaching" (*bstan pa ris med kyi bdag po*) the demise and ongoing restoration of Tengchen monastery. It appears that he succeeded in garnering support for his cause from the influential Gelukpa, who penned formal verses praising Shardza and expressing hope for the Bön teachings to flourish. During this time Drakkar is also said to have given prophetic guidance concerning Shardza's attraction and training of disciples, and other "amazing advice" concerning the teachings. In the end, the biographer concludes that one can fairly say that that Shardza "counted him as his own lama."²⁸⁷

* * *

The past events described not only here but throughout this chapter cannot escape the author's primary purpose, which of course is to inspire faith and not to provide the sort of historical 'facts' that would satisfy the criteria of our nineteenth century academic forebears. One may note, for example, that Tenpé Gyaltzen downplayed less harmonious inter-sectarian relationships Shardza experienced, mentioning only in passing how

²⁸⁶ NBT 284.4-6.

²⁸⁷ NBT 312.1-314.6.

Shardza was asked to respond formally to the sharp anti-Bön rhetoric of a certain Tenzin Drakpa (*rgyal rong bstan 'dzin grags pa*)—a conservative Nyingmapa from Gyarong—who represents one Buddhist figure to whom Shardza wrote a lengthy and rather scathing rebuttal.²⁸⁸

Yet these editorial decisions themselves ultimately act to underscore the significance of what Tenpé Gyaltzen does choose to include. The thematic rubrics of the *Pleasure Garden* suggest that what merited attention within Shardza's mature career were "how he made his mark in meditation practice in solitary places," and "how, depending on that [practice], he acted for the welfare of the teachings and sentient beings." More specifically, the text informs us that the first of these categories involved "how he held the demeanor of a hermit," and "how he experientially trained in Sūtra, Tantra and the Great Perfection;" while the second indicated "how he sustained the long-standing tradition of scriptural exegesis (*bshad*) and practice (*sgrub*)," and "how he widely perpetuated the continuity of the [methods] that ripen and liberate." But if one looks beyond Shardza's retreat schedule and the lists of texts he taught and received from others, one finds a significant amount of information conveyed in the comprehensive biography, information that tells us a great deal about how this little-known monk from Dzakhog attracted the attention of so many.

From what the evidence suggests, this process depended in large part upon his writings, his teaching opportunities, his periods of travel, and his dialogue with others—including liberal treasure-revealers and prominent Buddhists. Moreover, the fact that these were reported at all—let alone celebrated—affirms that such collaboration was

²⁸⁸ The request to respond appears on NBT 459.6, but little is said of Shardza's rebuttal, a polemical reprisal covering more than forty folios (in the *dbu chen* version).

undoubtedly valued, if not by the Drasa clergy, then by significant populations of Bönpos in Kham. And, despite his broad contemporary renown throughout the Bönpo world, it was here and in the eastern valleys and grasslands that Shardza's legacy has been most deeply felt. Let us now turn to look at the biographical treatment of the lasting impressions he left behind.

CHAPTER 6

In Memoriam: Measures, Miracles, and Terms of Endearment

The biographies of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen measure his contributions as a religious figure on a number of traditional registers. The categories making up these standard gauges of activity indicate the kinds of 'outcomes' that were most highly sought and valued among exemplary religious persons. The present chapter explores examples of two types of accomplishment reported in the life of Shardza: those that would have been expected of any reasonably good teacher; and those of a truly extraordinary nature. Taken together, these achievements demonstrate Shardza to be admirable both for his fundamental virtue as well as his ultimate sanctity.

Drawing from elements of Shardza's legacy that figured most prominently in Tenpé Gyaltsen's portrait, we will begin by looking at a somewhat surprising yet vital element of Shardza's religious career: his material contributions. For a tradition valorizing renunciation, it may seem paradoxical to emphasize what, *prima facie*, look to be worldly activities. However, tangible achievements over the course of a religious career—captured in enduring physical testaments such as reliquaries, statues and scriptures—have traditionally provided one accessible, highly-visible basis for assessing a person's lasting legacy.

Another fundamental way of demonstrating a teacher's effectiveness and long-term influence may be found in his or her successful training of disciples. While few details are conveyed about the individual lives of Shardza's brightest students, Tenpé Gyaltsen does provide a summary record of those he considered most outstanding. Several questions may be productively asked of those listed, who collectively represent the primary inheritors of Shardza's living legacy: What can be gleaned from their numbers, their religious orientations, and their uniformity or diversity? Who among them is

considered especially foremost? How or to what extent did Shardza influence them? In this last vein, the present chapter considers guidelines Shardza established for study, practice, and community life, as well as advice he offered for students near the end of his life.

Shardza's unusual death undoubtedly represents the most powerful statement of his enduring religious presence, and solidifies an inimitable legacy. If his material contributions to religious institutions and his training of capable disciples signified the kind of solid, dependable work expected of a virtuous teacher, his reported mastery of the dying process, along with the miraculous signs that accompanied it, pointed beyond that to the achievement of exceptional holiness. In particular, Shardza achieved complete proficiency in the most advanced meditations known to Bön—the visionary practices of *tögal* (*thod rgal*)—which ultimately allowed him to transform his own body at the time of his passing and to continue benefiting others even after abandoning his corporeal form. These astonishing events in Tenpé Gyaltzen's narrative disclose vital metaphysical and doctrinal assumptions, specifically associated with Dzokchen view and practice, and in the process firmly establish Shardza among the ranks of the saintly. In the end, both his transfigured bodily remains and the faith it inspired among his supporters left a powerful impression.

The present chapter will also examine operative terms and key categories Tenpé Gyaltzen uses throughout the narrative to situate Shardza and his work for posterity. Analyzing a step removed from traditional markers of a religious life well-lived, one might broadly ask: How, in the end, does our biographer indicate his teacher should be best remembered? What aspects of his reputation merit the most attention overall? From a disciple's perspective, where does Shardza stand vis-à-vis the hoary texts and traditions

of Bön, and among those who represent their most conspicuous conservators? A brief examination of Tenpé Gyaltzen's explicit treatment of these topics provides vital insight into the dynamics of the larger Bön community of which he is a part, and for whom he writes. In the last analysis, his biographical portrait is perhaps best understood as an act of reconciliation, an attempt to bring Shardza and his followers into harmonious accord with traditional authorities, under the banner of a religious ideal most Bönpos could embrace.

Material Contributions

In Tibetan tradition, monastic institutions have long served both as recipients of lay generosity as well as important centers of economic influence in their own right. The latter cultural pattern was most especially evident in the large-scale central Tibetan institutions emerging during the period of Geluk rule from the seventeenth through twentieth centuries. Yet the dominant Geluks were not the only religious officials to manage economic capital. The perspective of nineteenth and twentieth century Tibetans, including minority Bönpos, not only allowed for but expected effective monastic leaders to administrate funds in order to further religious goals. It is therefore not surprising to find a certain amount of narrative emphasis on Shardza's efforts to channel material wealth in support of religious institutions, communities, and special projects.

Indeed, Tenpé Gyaltzen embraced various instances of these material undertakings in Shardza's career as exemplifying ideal features of his life. In the *Pleasure Garden*, for instance, Shardza's legacy is described with a subsection devoted to the physical supports (*rten*)—reliquaries, status and scriptures—that he helped establish to perpetuate the

teachings.²⁸⁹ In a cogent and concise explanation of the logic behind this course of action, Tenpé Gyaltzen writes: "The enlightened activity of establishing the doctrine in [physical] remains provides the basis for the teaching's continuity to persist for a long time for the welfare of future disciples. That very [activity] will emerge in connection with the [so-called] 'action wheel of practical conduct (*bya ba las kyi 'khor lo*),' [which is understood as a complement to the endeavors of learning and meditation]. There are two ways one might briefly describe that process: 1) how physical embodiments of the teachings were left behind; and 2) how supporting [institutions in the form of] practice centers were developed."²⁹⁰

The reader will recall that Tenpé Gyaltzen earlier emphasized the young Shardza's disdain for accumulating worldly goods or enjoying the perquisites of the religious elite—exemplified by Shardza's vows not to perform 'town rituals' or ride on horseback before the age of fifty. Nevertheless, in considering Shardza's legacy, Tenpé Gyaltzen does not hesitate to enumerate the details of his teacher's later charitable allocations. And based on these reports, it appears that Shardza became quite effective at attracting patrons and marshalling support. He is credited, for example, with sponsoring the creation of a host of new statues at the reconstructed Tengchen—at least twelve of which were gilded, life-sized or larger figures filled with precious materials—including three principle deities a full two stories in height. The income from his travels in areas such as Nyarong, Trochen and Gyarong also allowed him to create an endowment consisting of more than

²⁸⁹ PSTS 62.

²⁹⁰ PSTS 62.

forty measures of Chinese silver coin, which provided a certain level of ongoing support for the monks at Tengchen.²⁹¹

The frontier of Shardza's generosity was not limited to his native region, however; as the *Pleasure Garden* explains, "he provided resources for more than a thousand offerings of gifts, material things and tea in order to make special donations for renovations and prayer gatherings at many large and small monastic centers in areas ranging from Degé to Amdo."²⁹² He is also said to have financed many publications, including thirteen volumes of his own work and more than three-hundred and thirty volumes of Bönpo canonical scripture.²⁹³ Much of the funds for these projects, as indicated previously, were accumulated during Shardza's tours of eastern Tibet circa 1900 to 1925.

Near the end of his life, Shardza was also credited with successfully spearheading construction of a new retreat center, which was located near his Dzakhog hermitage in the area of Getang (*dge thang*).²⁹⁴ Through the support of many in Dzakhog and Nyarong, he presided over construction of a temple, a teacher's residence, and separate living quarters for men and women consisting of twenty-seven rooms, along with more than two hundred sculpted images in gold and copper. This process was initiated by a letter he sent to Sangngak Lingpa at the age of seventy-five, in which he described himself as "an old Bönpo" and expressed uncertainty as to whether the two of them would be able to meet again. In response, Sangngak Lingpa rallied regional support to establish a practice community (*sgrub sde*) that would maintain Shardza's 'exalted and exceptional legacy' (*mtho ba dang khyad par rjes bzha*). The management and oversight

²⁹¹ PSTS 64.

²⁹² PSTS 66.

²⁹³ PSTS 65.

²⁹⁴ NBT 530.2-534.6.

of the project was undertaken by Shardza's younger half-brother, Tsultrim Tenzin. Upon completion, a larger and more physically-accessible training center was established to complement the smaller and more remote mountain hermitage (*ri khod*) Shardza had occupied for years.

Admittedly, much of the minutiae associated with Shardza's receiving of gifts and distribution of material assets tends to make for rather arcane reading. Nevertheless, certain general impressions emerge from Tenpé Gyaltzen's handling of the issue of wealth that warrant attention here. Firstly, the reader may recall how the biographer indicated in the early framing of his narrative project that a proper *namtar* ought not to focus too heavily upon a lama's procurement of resources. Excessive consideration paid to such activities could detract from the whole—which in his view should primarily be aimed at disclosing the protagonist's inner qualities of virtue and realization. Yet despite the fact that describing sizeable donations Shardza was involved with could create the appearance of impropriety, or even hypocrisy, Tenpé Gyaltzen nevertheless dedicates a section of the *Pleasure Garden* to celebrating such transactions.

While such reporting is not beyond what could be considered normal, one still might wonder why Tenpé Gyaltzen would risk fueling suspicion among some of his readers. The answer lies, I would argue, is the importance of establishing the conventional, communal and institutional aspects of Shardza's religious career, given his reputation as, first and foremost, a hermit and contemplative. As the reader may recall, the Yungdrung Ling *geshé* Sherap Drakpa and his supporters reportedly alleged that Shardza, and other contemplatives like him, largely focused on individual spiritual attainments, which in the end do relatively little to sustain the tradition more broadly and concretely. Seen in this light, the detailed accountings of Shardza's tangible public contributions appear aimed at providing a potentially effective rejoinder to this unacknowledged criticism. From this

point of view, it is also noteworthy that the more comprehensive text stresses how the center was organized with due appreciation for both the practice traditions and the community rules attributable to Menri's founder, 'the great Nyammé' Sherap Gyaltzen.²⁹⁵

Key Disciples

Shardza's spiritual legacy further reveals itself in a number of prominent followers designated in summary fashion in both biographies. No less than fifty individuals are listed in the *String of Wondrous Gems* as Shardza's disciples, including monastics, reincarnate lamas and hermits from a host of clans and regions. Eight figures top Tenpé Gyaltzen's litany, however, appearing ahead of the biographer himself in the abridged text.

Headlining this group are none other than the treasure-revealer Sangngak Lingpa and his consort, who are named as Shardza's preeminent disciples. Reserving this distinction for this influential couple serves to underscore the esteem in which the *tertön* and his partner held Shardza, the closeness of their mutual relationship, and the significant support they provided. This sponsorship was evident not only in the foundation of the Getang center but also in an additional practice community (*sgrub sde*) in the Nyarong valley the treasure-revealer established "on the system of teaching and practice that is the long-standing tradition of the great, glorious Shardzapa."²⁹⁶ But given that the *tertön* was a close contemporary who not only received but also transmitted teachings to Shardza—most notably the core treasure material that provided a basis for the *Kusum Rangshar*—Tenpé Gyaltzen admits that his status as a disciple can only be affirmed from a particular

²⁹⁵ NBT 546.4-5; NBT 549.6.

²⁹⁶ NBT 578.6-579.3. The center was named Changchup Jonpé Kyetsel (*byang chub ljon pa'i skyed tshal*), and was located in an area known as Yungdrung Sangwa Pelri Drakpo Namchak Yangdzong (*g.yung drung gsang ba dpal ri drag po gnam lcags yang rdzong*).

vantage point. Indeed, in the elderly Shardza's letter to the treasure-revealer expressing his doubts about the likelihood of their reunion, Shardza himself respectfully requests Sangngak Lingpa to look after him as a follower in future lives.²⁹⁷

The succeeding three individuals named in the *Pleasure Garden* represent Shardza's foremost disciples in a stricter sense. These respectively include: his nephew Lodrö Gyatso (*blo gros rgya mtsho*), whom Shardza appointed to preside over the meditation center at Getang and who later became his regent (*rgyal mtshab*); Dawa Drakpa of the Ra family (*dbra sras zla ba grags pa*), Shardza's "sole heart son" who manifested the rainbow body upon passing away; and Tsultrim Tenpé Gyaltzen (*tshul khrim bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*), Shardza's foremost student in Amdo and the abbot of Tashi Khyil monastery (alias Togden Göñ), where he established a thriving community for teaching and study (*'chad nyan gyi grwa sde*) and a meditation school (*sgom grwa*).²⁹⁸ Shardza's younger half-brother Tsultrim Tenzin, also named as "the holy, great learned one in the Chung lineage" (*gcung mkhan chen dam pa*) also deserves special mention—although his name appears slightly later in the index of key followers—as a disciple who regularly rendered assistance to Shardza and managed affairs on his behalf. Among other activities, he was instrumental in establishing a program of study (*bshad grwa*) sustaining Shardza's legacy at the monastery of Tsedrug Sheldrak Ngöngé Tsel (*rtse drug shel brag mngon dga'i tshal*) in Khyungyul.²⁹⁹ According to sources within the Bön exile community, this particular monastery has remained a primary center for the transmission of Shardza's teachings down to the present day.

²⁹⁷ NBT 530.2.

²⁹⁸ NBT 578.5.

²⁹⁹ NBT 579.3.

Beyond these leading figures, many others are named among Shardza's most significant students, representing a broad cross-section of religious communities both sociologically and geographically. For example, a number of noteworthy *tulku* find inclusion, including not only local figures such as the Ra family incarnation, Shenten Kelzang Tenpé Nyima, but also regional lamas of renown, such as the sixth Kundrol Drakpa, Humchen Drodul Lingpa.³⁰⁰ While the full list of disciples is provided in the subsequent translation, one may observe here that it contains leading lamas from Bönpo enclaves in Amdo Ngawa and Sharkhog—such as the Rinpung *tulku* Sherap Namgyal—as well as others from Chamdo and as far away as Western Nepal.³⁰¹ The list also reveals a striking diversity among Shardza's students, including a government official from Trochen,³⁰² a number of non-monastic hermit-yogins,³⁰³ at least one person with a Menri pedigree,³⁰⁴ and individuals with Buddhist affiliations, including Changchup Dorjé, a teacher of the contemporary Dzokchen teacher, Namkhai Norbu.³⁰⁵ While Changchup Dorjé was hardly the only Buddhist to take teachings from Shardza, he does receive special mention here as a leading disciple.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁰ dbra sprul gshen bstan skal bzang bstan pa'i nyi ma; kun grol drug pa hum chen 'gro 'dul gling pa.

³⁰¹ The current Menri abbot shared with me a printed copy (in block-printed, *dbu chen* script) of a letter Shardza composed for Sherap Namgyal (*rin spungs mchog sprul shes rab rnam rgyal*), which contain a step-by-step outline of guidelines for practice. While the details await further research and analysis, it is clear that his relationships with disciples, marked by such correspondence, surely represented one main channel through which his influence entered into a number of vital Bönpo populations, including this key area in present-day western Sichuan.

³⁰² khro chen nang so chen po tshe dbang nor 'dzin

³⁰³ rtogs ldan zla ba grags pa; rnal 'byor shes rab mchog ldan; zer 'phro rtogs ldan dbang lu

³⁰⁴ sman ri ba dge bstan pa phun tshogs

³⁰⁵ This individual, known elsewhere as *nyag la byang chub rdo rje*, is here designated *tshe dbang 'gyur med byang chub rdo rje rtsal*. Norbu gives his dates as 1826-1961/78.

³⁰⁶ Evidence for Changchup Dorjé's relationship to Shardza is scant, but if a figure dubbed 'the renouncer Tsewang Gyurmé' (*bya btang tshe dbang 'gyur med*) is meant to refer to him, then he was present with other lamas from Dzakhog and Nyarong to receive Dzokchen teachings when Shardza was 54, in 1912 (cf. NBT 337.2ff).

The *Pleasure Garden* explicitly extols Shardza's broad-minded approach to this multiplicity of students. In summarizing his teaching legacy, Tenpé Gyaltzen writes that Shardza "disseminated without sectarianism or bias, in accord with the wishes of each individual, everything from expositions connected with Sūtra, Tantra and the Great Perfection up to and including initiation and authorization rites, sequential instructions, and reading transmissions to all kinds of great lamas and lamas of large and small different types of Bönpo and Buddhist monasteries belonging to the lands of China, Tibet and Nepal."³⁰⁷ Not surprisingly, this liberality in dispensing instruction to a wide audience is tempered by the biographer's reassertion of its conservative content. In the *String of Wondrous Gems*, Tenpé Gyaltzen clearly demonstrates the purity of Shardza's doctrinal sources, which are traced back to Menri's founder. Moreover, Shardza's approach is depicted as ideally integrating the potentially divergent views and practices found within the Tibetan religious landscape:

Now, if we recount a little of the story of the greatness of the disciples who upheld Shardza's tradition, it says in the *Sūtra of the Great Assembly*: "In Bön there are divisions of outer, inner and secret. The Secret Tantras are generally framed by the view of the Great Vehicle; the Inner Tantras cultivate the essence of Secret Mantra meditation; and the Outer Tantras determine actions to be adopted or abandoned through the monastic code of conduct. The unity of these three accomplishes the welfare of both oneself and others." According to the meaning of what is said here, the vehicles of Sūtra, Tantra and the unsurpassed [Great Perfection] all provide a single person with the necessary factors on the path to enlightenment. This is the unsullied tradition of the second Victorious One, the great Nyammé [Sherap Gyaltzen], and precisely this is to be taken up as a doctrinal foundation in the present day. By

³⁰⁷ PSTS 58.

disseminating it in all directions, one becomes the king of all doctrine-holders; this is the unmistakable tradition of the lord of *siddhas*, the great Shardza.³⁰⁸

Shardza's broad dissemination here suggests an effective pedagogy, one that fittingly harmonizes different orientations to the religious life, which include the conduct of a monastic, the meditations of a Tantric, and the view of a Great Perfection contemplative. While he remains unbiased and impartial with respect to students, his approach is also shown to be duly grounded in orthodox sources. In this way he thereby charts a middle course. Tenpé Gyaltzen identifies Shardza's approach as "sustaining the unity of both study (*bshad*) and practice (*sgrub*)," two complementary categories that animate his description throughout, and to which we shall return below.

For now we may note that the fusion of these two religious endeavors—one devoted to scriptural exegesis and the other to meditation and Tantric *sādhana*—appear to define in broad terms Shardza's ideal community. With the establishment of the center at Getang, which was specifically intended to provide for the perpetuation of Shardza's legacy, Tenpé Gyaltzen reports telling remarks Shardza made to guide the assembly.

In particular, the biography reports that in the fifth Tibetan month of Shardza's seventy-fifth year (July of 1933), Shardza took a break from teaching in order to prepare and consecrate holy objects for two months, during which time his younger half-brother Tsultrim Tenzin, his nephew (and eventual successor) Lodrö Gyatso and those who would comprise the new community assembled.³⁰⁹ Instructing them on how to sustain a retreat center (*sgrub sde*) in the future, Shardza spoke of the need for a monastic community (*grwa sde*) dedicated to both study (*'chad nyan*, 'explaining and listening')

³⁰⁸ NBT 579.6-580.4.

³⁰⁹ NBT 545.5ff.

and contemplation (*sgom sgrub*, 'meditation and practice'). Elaborating further, he advocated for a center unlike those that identify themselves strictly as academic schools ('*chad nyan gyi grwa*), Tantric schools (*sngags grwa*), or meditation schools (*sgom grwa*); instead, the center ought to support a fusion (*zung 'brel*) of these necessary elements.

The biography thus embraces an ideal complementarity between the religious alternatives of the day, a legacy that embraces a skillful synthesis of potentially divergent trends. This is evident amidst the details of the texts and practices Shardza recommends, which involve a combination of monasticism (the novice precepts), ethical orientation (the bodhisattva vows), and Tantric contemplation. Not surprisingly, most of the sources for the initiations and meditations to be performed at Getang derive primarily from Shardza's own works, including several of his *Five Treasures*—such as the *Denö Dzö* (*sde snod mdzod*), *Lungrik Dzö* (*lung rigs mdzod*), *Yingrik Dzö* (*dbying rigs mdzod*)—as well as the *Dzogchen Kusum Rangshar* (*rdzogs chen sku gsum rang shar*), *Ngöndro Kalung Gyatso* (*sngon 'gro bka' lung rgya mtsho*) and the *Kunzang Nyingtik* (*kun bzang snying thig*).³¹⁰ The advice given here largely parallels the training regimen Shardza recommended in a letter to Sherap Namgyal, his Amdo Sharkhog disciple mentioned above, which the reader may review in translation in Appendix I.

Shardza's retreat center did not appear to have stressed full monastic ordination for its members, which is not at all surprising for a small-scale, local community in Kham that clearly placed a premium on meditation practice. Nevertheless, Tenpé Gyaltsen's account does highlight a concern Shardza voiced for maintaining a real measure of purity and

³¹⁰ NBT 547.2ff.

uniformity within the ranks of the residents. In fact, upon the inauguration of the center Shardza reputedly expressed his feelings on the subject, underscoring the need for monastic rules—a sentiment that surely would have appealed to a more conservative audience. In the following passage, Tenpé Gyaltzen quotes his teacher's own explanation for why standards of conduct were so vital:

If a person is like a solitary wanderer in the mountains—a Togdenpa (*rtogs ldan pa*)—then, relying on the safeguard of a yogi's own law, he needs to continually sustain and protect his own being (*rang rgyud*). Such a person, like a lion, keeps a mountain retreat (*ri khrod*) by himself, without companions. Besides this he has no need for a "residential community" (*gnas sde*) in a particular area. And therefore, he has no need to make aspirations for a clerical community's code of discipline (*gshen sde'i sgrigs khrims*). However, when the collective *saṅgha* is maintained in one rooted place, this is what is called a clerical assembly (*gshen sde 'dus pa*); when this is so, an elucidation of monastic rules is, by all means, extremely vital. If there is no monastic rule in the *saṅgha*, the community members' thoughts and actions will not combine in unison, and differences will develop between each individual system of spiritual practice that is maintained.

When this is the case, the qualities of those called '*brahmacarya* companions'—friends whose conduct is thoroughly pure (*grogs tshangs pa mtshungs par spyod pa*)—will not be complete. There will be no occasions in which one will help bring benefit to another. For this reason, [figures] such as the great lord Nyammé [Sherap Gyaltzen] authored an exposition supporting the *saṅgha* through a code of conduct.

Nowadays, however, some people say, "We are upholding a hermitage," and yet they dispense with all the temporally-specific rituals (*dus mchod*) and daily religious services (*bon spyod*). Turning away from the rules of the monastery (*dgon pa'i khrims*), it seems they imagine being a hermit or a practitioner amounts to just beating a drum by themselves at their own time. Because the view and conduct of these people is discordant, they become

sinful friends for one another. And they go for refuge to the *saṅgha*. But when one keeps company with a friend who practices the path, if one doesn't know how real companionship is demonstrated, one's refuge will not be totally pure. So, avoiding conduct innovated by ourselves (*rang bzo*), if we can maintain the continuity of a practice community with the pure discipline consistent with the intention of the Victorious Ones' founding tradition, then this old man's aspirations would be fulfilled.³¹¹

In recounting the elderly Shardza's comments here, Tenpé Gyaltzen draws the reader's attention to what looks like a reasonable approach to community organization, one that values tradition, coherence and consistency. Certainly this outlook helps temper the image of Shardza as advocating the lone yogi's introverted realization—one of the charges reportedly leveled against him by Sherap Drakpa. Indeed, similar conservative principles appear to characterize Shardza's earlier messages to his disciples as well, which may well reflect his biographer's rhetorical strategy to win support from the more clerically-minded. For example, Tenpé Gyaltzen recalls Shardza often inveighing against ritualists who performed animal sacrifices (*dmār mchod*) as well as would-be patrons who made expensive religious offerings of 'dedication meat' (*bsngos sha*), describing such things as barbaric and reprehensible Tibetan customs. According to Tenpé Gyaltzen, Shardza admonished his students consistently and earnestly, saying, "If genuine lamas in various other places individually may not accept the idea [that these things are shameful], there isn't anything at all I can do. But if those in my lineage of disciples engage in this kind of negative behavior, then I am not their lama."³¹² The traditional reader is led to understand, then, that proper outward conduct was of utmost concern to Shardza, and a

³¹¹ NBT 549.1-550.4.

³¹² NBT 347.2-348.3.

standard of behavior for Shardza and for his primary students was conscientiously observed. Grounded at least in principle in hallowed Menri tradition, this moral sensibility, one is to conclude, was faithfully passed on by Shardza and upheld as an integral part of his legacy.

Shardza's standpoint on particular subjects pertaining to his disciples—such as the immorality of certain rituals—may be perfectly evident in the text, but one element conspicuously absent from the biographical portrait are details that distinguish and illustrate the personalities of individual followers. The narrative tells us little about his students' idiosyncrasies or their relative proximity to Shardza; instead, they appear in limited, supporting roles in a storyline that centers squarely on the master—which admittedly is not surprising given the genre. Previously it was noted, for instance, how disciples' requests for teachings served as an early catalyst for Shardza's prolific authorship—yet it was not especially vital to know who was doing the asking, or what sort of results were achieved.

Occasionally throughout the story Shardza's disciples are implicated in dynamic patterns of auspiciousness and karma—what Tibetans call *tendrel* (*rten 'brel*)—that were responsible for shaping the course of certain key events. Oftentimes, however, the karmic forces engendered by disciples on such occasions are rather diffuse and non-specific to individuals. This phenomenon is most commonly reported in relation to negative circumstances Shardza encountered, and would seem to represent an interpretive strategy employed by Tenpé Gyaltzen—as a disciple himself—to accept blame in deference to his teacher. For example, Shardza's inability to establish a strong early connection to Yungdrung Ling on his first pilgrimage, about which he later expressed some regret, is linked to the insufficient merit of those who would become his students (*gdul bya'i bsod*

nams).³¹³ A similar sentiment was also conveyed when Shardza later discerned signs of some deterioration (*nyams*) of his formal relationships (*dam tshig*) with Tantric deities. In this context we find that these conditions arose on account of Shardza having "a great many close disciples" (*bu slob ha cang mang*) to whom he offered many types of initiation and instruction—a culturally recognized model of interdependence that can adversely effect the guru.

These occasional gestures on the part of the disciple-biographer succeed in shifting personal culpability away from his teacher and towards a group of which he is a part. In the process, he models a humility in his writing that ultimately may serve to restore and reassert the virtue of Shardza's disciples. Moreover, further instances of *tendrel* are reported in which the disciples' actions are both positive and at times attributable to particular individuals. This is especially evident in the events unfolding immediately preceding and following Shardza's uncanny death.

Miraculous Passing

Tenpé Gyaltzen's recounts the final culmination of Shardza's religious life with both drama and precision. The text weaves together prosaic, detailed accounts of scriptures taught, rites performed, advice dispensed and visitors entertained with eyewitness descriptions of unusual happenings leading ultimately to a miraculous death. A certain anticipation builds in the narrative as Shardza's manner begins to change in his final months, changes that allude to well-known signs of realization. In the process, Tenpé Gyaltzen aims to inspire faith through the extraordinary, but all the while relating what

³¹³ NBT 105.2; NBT 148.2-4.

took place in a manner that draws upon traditional paradigms—especially those unique to Dzokchen tradition—and in a reporting style that lends credibility to his amazing claims.

The general tenor of the *String of Wondrous Gems* remains primarily historical as one approaches the last years of Shardza's life. That is to say, the text proceeds descriptively, with little or no authorial commentary to distract one from the progression of past events. One learns that for the final decade of his life, Shardza remained in his hermitage in Dzakhog. From here he alternated periods of strict retreat with teaching a broad spectrum of material to diverse audiences, ranging from intimate groups sharing his hermitage to large public assemblies, to which he gave annual instruction on the preliminary practices. Between ritual performances and textual elucidations, Shardza entertained increasing numbers of prominent people who sought him out. For example, in the autumn of his seventieth year (1928), he fulfilled requests for an audience from "more than a thousand people of renown."³¹⁴ Three years later, "many hundreds of people in the Dza region" wanted to have an audience with him in the spring—for whom he provided foundational teachings on refuge and visualization—and that year "high authorities, important people, and many villagers from near and far" came to see him. For long-time students, he "cleared up doubts on the scriptural systems, and practitioners checked their experiences and cut through mistakes."³¹⁵

On a personal level, with his writings in order and a new retreat center for his disciples established, Shardza's focus reportedly began to shift away from his activities in this world. Close disciples began to notice uncanny changes in his behavior, changes that set him apart from others: "Around that year (his seventy-third), his disposition changed

³¹⁴ NBT 508.2.

³¹⁵ NBT 515.2-516.2.

more than before. He made friends with those he wasn't acquainted with...Everyone said he was unlike anyone else, and he spoke 'special aphorisms,' [a quality of enlightened speech]."³¹⁶ *The String of Wondrous Gems* later recounts that, "he remained in a relaxed, restful state and his outward appearance—the way he sat and the way he gazed—were nothing at all like before; thus everyone was talking about why this was so."³¹⁷

While the point is made only implicitly, the reader is led to conclude that henceforth Shardza embodied for his followers the ideal demeanor of a true Dzokchen adept—carefree, relaxed, open and flexible. These qualities, extolled in the often poetic rhetoric of the Great Perfection, stand out in contrast to the controlled, complex, and carefully-sequenced techniques of visualization, recitation, and physical posture that characterize most Tantric practice. Moreover, it is only a rare individual who reaches a point of abandoning the formal Tantric practices that are typically understood to support the fundamental Dzokchen practice of simply resting in the mind's 'abiding reality' or 'natural state' (*gnas lugs*). It is therefore significant that, during the winter of his seventy-fifth year, Shardza reportedly dwelt "in a state of only leisure," eschewing methods of formal practice well-known to him and remaining "thoroughly immersed in the great royal domain that is reality itself (*bon nyid*)."³¹⁸ Tenpé Gyaltzen adds that "his disposition gradually changed from before; when he took food, sometimes he ate a lot and sometimes he wouldn't eat unless asked to—this happened a lot. When he ran across some children, he would go amongst them to play. When there were small birds singing near the window of his quarters, he would imitate them. Several times he behaved in ways that didn't

³¹⁶ NBT 516.2.

³¹⁷ NBT 555.2.

³¹⁸ NBT 557.1.

attend to [keeping up] appearances and everyone was surprised. Those who were practitioners thought that this was a sign that he had progressed to a very high realization on the path."³¹⁹

Further evidence of realization is presented in the following year—that of the wood-dog (1934)—when Shardza indicated to his disciples a clairvoyant sense for the imminent timing of his own death. In a further allusion to Dzokchen tradition, which emphasizes a fundamental relationship between awareness (*rig pa*) and the ultimate, unchanging expanse (*dbying*), Tenpé Gyaltzen writes that his master "turned his focus to thinking that the time had come to dissolve his form into the expanse of clear light." At this point the author explicitly points to Shardza's transcendent view; he writes that Shardza realized he had achieved all his aims in training disciples in this realm, and therefore understood that it was now appropriate to turn his attention to 'other beings' (*'gro ba gzhan*) elsewhere.³²⁰ Moreover, Shardza reportedly manifested "only to the face of others" what is described as "an indeterminate illness that appeared suddenly like a minor ailment producing the quality of heaviness in both of his legs." When questioned about it, Shardza revealed that "this is a sign that it is the right moment for me to go."³²¹ The lama thus appears to be a skillful co-conspirator in his own impending demise, informed by his knowledge of karmic timing as well as his altruistic intention.

When word spread of these revelations, disciples led by his half-brother Tsultrim Tenzin, his nephew Lodrö Gyatso, and a long-time student named Tsultrim Wangchuk hastily convened to perform traditional prayers beseeching the master to remain in this

³¹⁹ NBT 557.1-557.4.

³²⁰ NBT 558.4-6.

³²¹ NBT 558.6-559.1.

world (*zhabs brtan*), a ritual act underscoring the potentially beneficial karmic influence disciples may bring to bear on their teacher's well-being. After these were completed, Shardza responded: "Since my time has come, [my life] can't be restored. At any rate, the goals I focused on, such as *The Five Treasuries*, have been accomplished, so don't have any regrets at all. However, due to the auspicious link (*rten 'brel*) created by the lamas' insistent entreaty—made with great earnestness—as well as the compassion of the three jewels and the faith of you, masters and students, I won't die for a few months."³²²

In the intervening period, Shardza's health and vitality seemed to return and a number of additional signs were reported which lent further credence to the view that he was a great adept. For example, a few days after an elder disciple named Tsenam (*tshe rnam*) had left the hermitage with an illness, Shardza suddenly announced, "Tsenam has died." Though no one else had seen or heard anything, a request for prayers for the deceased reached the hermitage that day at tea time.³²³ The biographer reports that when pressed with questions about such things, Shardza was rarely forthcoming. Nevertheless, a number of disciples reported uncanny experiences around him. As Tenpé Gyaltzen explains:

Once during that time a disciple [said] that in the lama's body [he saw] divine bodies very vividly and clearly, and an attendant directly saw that Shardza moved without his feet touching the ground. This that I have heard seems to be authentic.... [Later, on a ceremonial] occasion, [during the ritual] there was no shadow from his body appearing in the light of the butter lamps

³²² NBT 559.5-560.1.

³²³ NBT 561.6ff.

and this seems to have been observed by several people. Then as before Shardza remained in a state of continuously gazing in meditation."³²⁴

Emerging from oral accounts shared among disciples, events like these portray more than just superhuman powers that might be dismissively written off as odd and unbelievable. While such reports highlight the marvelous and the uncommon, they also make sense within a shared cultural lexicon. Rather than exaggerating the extraordinary 'otherness' of Shardza, for traditional readers these anecdotes point primarily to the imminent possibility of specific types of religious attainment. To put it differently, one might say that instead of making the familiar seem strange, the narrative portrait of Shardza here potentially makes the highly unlikely seem almost ordinary.

From another vantage point, one may also note that Shardza's seemingly unintentional and effortless displays of 'lightness' prefigure his attainment of the Dzokchen rainbow body (*'ja' lus*), about which we will have more to say below. And the presence of deities within his physical form reinforces the possibility of experiencing the divinization of the human body advocated in the Highest Yoga Tantras. This level of interpretation is in fact quite essential to Tenpé Gyaltzen's narrative, for it is only by connecting extraordinary signs of the arcane or the paranormal with established features of a legitimate religious path that the sum total can add up to a recognized state of sanctity.

Of course, the most remarkable manifestations appeared during the dying process itself. During the fourth month of the Tibetan calendar, Shardza reminded his students that among Dzokchen practitioners, "the best die like an old dog," while the worst depart

³²⁴ NBT 560.1-5.

"like a king," i.e., at the center of a large spectacle. He therefore sought out a quiet location on a mountainside called Rabzhiteng (*rab zhi steng*), attended by his close disciples. He advised them in earnest, reminding them that "the foundation of all good qualities is the vows and the commitments," and encouraging them to maintain their pledges and to have faith in themselves.³²⁵

On the thirteenth day of the month, he established himself inside of a small tent his disciples had erected. After performing an elaborate feast offering for the deity Tsewang Böyulma, he extended a hand in blessing to each of his disciples and said, "Now sew up the door of this tent and don't come and disturb me for seven days. Afterwards do a feast offering and it will be very auspicious."³²⁶ As they prepared to do so, Shardza sang "many adamantine songs [of realization] (*g.yung drung gi mgur*)."

The disciples recited a prayer, and, as Tenpé Gyaltzen explains, they "met Shardza in contemplative equipoise. When his breath's movement faded away, his face became white and fresh like a youth, and they then closed the door of the tent."³²⁷ The language used to describe the events taking place at this stage makes it abundantly clear that Shardza's experience depended upon, and should be interpreted in terms of, the advanced contemplations of the Dzokchen system. For example, his mind (*dgongs pa*) is understood to rest in a state of meditative equipoise in the expanse of primordial purity (*ka dag gi dbyings*); within this state appearances and mind merge in the experience of 'one taste' (*ro gcig*) leading to the condensing of all external luminosity (*phyi gsal*) within

³²⁵ PSTS 98; NBT 563.5-6.

³²⁶ NBT 563.6-564.2. Shardza specified that the feast offering be conducted according to the triad *rgya bod dran gsum*, i.e., the rites of *tshe dbang rgya gar ma*, *tshe dbang bod yul ma*, and *dran pa tshe sgrub*)

³²⁷ NBT 565.1-3.

the sphere of the inner expanse (*nang dbying*), which is here described in characteristic Dzokchen phrasing as the 'youthful vase body' (*gzhon nu bum sku*).

The specifics of what was observed in subsequent days thus would have been interpreted esoterically by disciples, who understood the ensuing signs as evidence of the contemplative process becoming visibly apparent. Nevertheless, the uncanny events that were reported would certainly have impressed the uninitiated, leaving little doubt that Shardza had successfully brought his spiritual life to fulfillment. According to the *Pleasure Garden*:

The next day, many great and small linked spheres of rainbow light and many kinds of horizontal and vertical [lights] shone above his tent. At night there were rainbow lights, [including] an especially clear white light that was like a [white] woolen cloth appearing alone. After three days the ground shook and there was a loud noise and a gentle rain of flowers fell. After the fourth day variegated light emanated through the seams of the tent; the five different rainbow colors were vividly enveloping [each other] and arising like boiling misty vapor.

Then, a genuine and holy disciple, Tsultrim Wangchuk—the best of all the practitioners—said, "If we leave [the master's] body for a long time now, there is the danger that there will be no remains at all as a support for our faith and our prayers in the future." Hurrying to meet [the master's] holy remains, he opened the door of the small tent and prostrated himself. He saw that the remains were enveloped in light and that they were elevated about one cubit in midair. He drew near to the presence [of his master]. Most of the nails of [the master's] hands and feet were strewn upon his seat. The body remained. It had

transformed to about the size of a one-year-old child, and the heart was warm.³²⁸

Shardza's holy relics were then ritually venerated, and large numbers of people came to meet them, receive blessings and take up spiritual practice in the vicinity for approximately a hundred days.³²⁹ His remains were kept for a time in a shrine (*gsas khang*) in the sleeping quarters of his hermitage, during which time indications of tangible blessings persisted. As his biographer writes, "When it was encountered by any kind of person, whether greater or lesser, their hair would stand on end and quiver and tears would fall out of spontaneous devotion—such things happened to people whether they had faith or not. The faithful had an inexhaustible energy of blessing that caused [their faith] to develop further. This is only what I experienced directly without any exaggeration."³³⁰ Afterwards, a permanent reliquary was constructed for the relics at Getang, and Shardza's main disciples, lead by his nephew Lodrö Gyatso, took responsibility for carrying on his lineage.

A number of important conclusions may be drawn from the account of Shardza's passing. First, a clear relationship pertains between the miraculous signs that appear and the specific vocabulary of advanced Dzokchen practice. In short, Shardza's bodily transformation, achieved through a conscious dissolution of the coarse physical elements into their subtle counterparts in the form of light, is only possible for an adept who has fully mastered the four stages of the Direct Crossing or *tögal* practices. While the details of this process, which facilitate the attainment of the 'rainbow body' (*ja' lus*), go beyond

³²⁸ PSTS 99-100.

³²⁹ NBT 570.2-571.5. The presiding lama for some of the rites conducted at this time was the Kundrol incarnation Humchen Lingpa (*smon rgyal kun grol ba hum chen gling pa*).

³³⁰ NBT 573.1-5.

the present scope, the claim to such an achievement obviously represents a potent soteriological assertion. By demonstrating a link between special esoteric feats and the zenith of a religious path venerated by orthodox Bönpo, the text establishes a necessary connection between what otherwise might have represented 'magic' but not necessarily 'heroic virtue'.

Additionally, the reader learns that Shardza's tremendous spiritual intensity rendered service to the world possible even after his departure. The relics he left behind provided a palpable benefit to those who came in contact with them, demonstrating his power to continue serving as link to enlightened beings for those he left behind—a feature reminiscent of medieval Christian saints, who were understood after their deaths to serve as intercessors on behalf of the faithful. One may also note here the intriguing agency granted to the disciple Tsultrim Wangchuk, a longtime companion, who boldly chose to override the master's instructions by entering the tent before a week had passed. It is tempting to suggest that his role was foregrounded here in order to explain why the entirety of Shardza's body did not completely and utterly dissolve—an attainment that traditionally surpasses even that described here. Indeed, the reader is left to conclude that Shardza would have fully dispersed his physical form had he not been interrupted. Thus, any possible perceived fault or shortcoming in this remarkable process remains traceable to a disciple's decision—albeit one made for selfless reasons.

Finally, one may note the biographer's concern to assure his readers that he has not fabricated any of the events in question. He anticipates a certain amount of skepticism and actively works to persuade us that his account is written in good faith and from an eyewitness's perspective. In this way Tenpé Gyaltzen seeks to provide a memorable capstone on his teacher's legacy, one that ultimately validates the life which preceded it.

Conceptual Categories and Authorial Comments

As important as Shardza's material contributions, well-trained students and amazing relics may have been to establishing his reputation, over the course of this study we have observed the biographer's efforts to represent Shardza's legacy beyond these important basic registers. Throughout all phases of the biographical project, in fact, one finds Tenpé Gyaltzen locating his teacher within a religious landscape contoured by several significant religious categories and classifications. For example, in Chapter Two, we saw how the biographer took a moment in the *Pleasure Garden* to stress how wholly inappropriate it was to regard Shardza as 'New Bön,' dismissing the imputation as totally unfounded. Similarly, Chapter Five included authorial comments distancing Shardza's written treatises from those of 'New Bönpos' and from the phenomenon of 'New Treasure.' Terms such as these were integral to Bönpos' own self-understanding, and their deployment sets parameters and lays out arguments for how Shardza's contributions should be interpreted and his status determined. We will return to the topic of New Bön shortly, but first let us briefly review some other fundamental terms in which the overall portrait is framed, and some of the more compelling statements the author provides to complete his teacher's likeness.

In Tenpé Gyaltzen's biographies, Shardza is presented most fundamentally as an exemplar of what is called the Practice Lineage (*sgrub brgyud*). The term suggests an ensemble of esoteric ritual and meditation (from *sgrub*, 'to accomplish,' as in *sgrub thabs*, *sādhana*, and *sgrub thob*, *siddha*). The biography clearly associates the Practice Lineage with the lifestyle of renunciators (*bya bral*) and ascetics (*bka' thub*), or those who concentrate on individual retreat as opposed to participating in monastic assemblies or performing public rituals. Other related categories of persons who typify this religious

approach include non-celibate yogis (*rnal 'byor pa*), who are often called 'realized ones' or *togden* (*rtogs ldan*) in these sources. In the *Pleasure Garden*, Tenpé Gyaltzen links the Practice Lineage to an ancient and venerable tradition associated with the original Bön family lineages: "In accord with the genuine practices of the former holy ones of the Dru, Zhu, Pa and Me'u [clans]—the owners of the Practice Lineage teachings, uncontaminated by any local customs whatsoever—[Shardza] principally acted only as a practitioner as opposed to a commentator."³³¹ Elsewhere this lineage is more specifically linked to those known as Dampa Yabsé (*dam pa yab sras*), 'the holy father and sons,' a reference to the yogic heritage of the Atri (*a khrid*) lineage master Gongdzö Ritro Chenpo (*dgongs mdzod ri khrod chen po*, 1038-1096) and his direct disciples Me'u Lhari Nyenpo (*rme'u lha ri gnyan po*) and Metön Sherap Özer (*me ston shes rap 'od zer*).

In one instance, Tenpé Gyaltzen attempts to minimize any legitimate alternative to the Practice Lineage, writing that: "Between the two, the general [five-fold] cultural sciences and the teachings of Bön, the magnificent [Shardza] gave [instruction] as a master of the teachings of the Practice Lineage of the definitive truth. Thus he was certainly not one to promote interpretations concerning the ordinary cultural sciences."³³² However, the prototypical counterpart of the Practice Lineage is not this traditional five-fold curriculum of 'cultural sciences' (*rig pa'i gnas nga*); rather, it is represented by the Scholastic or Exegetical Lineage (*bshad brgyud*), a tradition of learned interpretation (from *bshad*, 'to explain').

If the Practice Lineage for Bönpos derives from family traditions credited with preserving esoteric material stretching back all the way to the imperial period, then the

³³¹ PSTS 49.

³³² PSTS 57.

Exegetical Lineage originates rather from authoritative textual traditions epitomized in the works of Nyammé Sherap Gyaltzen. In several places, preserving the combination of the long-standing traditions of Dampa Yabsé and that of Nyammé is lauded as the ideal. For example, Tenpé Gyaltzen writes of Shardza's training: "In these degenerate times, it is very important to engage the path gradually. Thus, in order to avoid the decline of the experiential system of Sūtra, Tantra and the Unsurpassed [Great Perfection]—the long-standing tradition of our forebears Dampa Yabsé and Gyalwa Nyammé Chenpo Yabsé ('the great peerless Victor, father and sons')—Shardza, while following the footsteps of past Practice Lineage masters, continued intellectual endeavors ('*chad nyan*, 'explaining and listening')."³³³

Naturally, the best place for academic study was central Tibet, and the reader learns that at the age of thirty-one Shardza considered a second journey to the Drasa, where the text tells us he could "preserve the canonical Word (*bka'*) and the exegesis of scholastic definitions (*mtshan nyid kyi bshad*)."³³⁴ However, this plan never came to fruition. It is fair to say that some care was exercised by our author in presenting this proverbial road not taken, which would have led to a formalized monastic education. In an interesting twist, one learns that a protector deity revealed to Shardza in a dream that the auspicious time for undertaking such an endeavor had passed, and that great benefit would rather be achieved if, for disciples in Kham, he upheld the Practice Lineage teachings in retreat.³³⁵ Thus, Shardza's unambiguous standing as an exemplar of the Practice Lineage ultimately owes to the karmic predispositions of his disciples and to a mild instance of divine

³³³ NBT 322.4-6.

³³⁴ NBT 148.2.

³³⁵ NBT 148.3-149.1.

intervention. And while the biographies revere Shardza as an outstanding member of this tradition—one widely appreciated by audiences in Kham—they also insinuate that this decision did not result from Shardza's own partiality or any prejudice against the alternative. Moreover, in the last analysis, the biographer asserts that Shardza successfully transcended the limitations normally associated with a practice-first approach, resulting in an ideal synthesis of complementary religious pursuits. In the *Pleasure Garden*, Tenpé Gyaltzen explains:

A few scholars, orienting themselves toward speaking and listening (*'chad nyan*), are lax in meditation practice; some, [conversely], postponing intellectual pursuits (*'chad nyan*), make a lot of effort in practice. An eminent master, however, makes even the positive qualities of contemplative accomplishment very clearly evident through explication and understanding; such activity is complete only in a great being [like] this [Shardza]. One should know that by the power of these [two], a lineage of disciples thus emerged, and even benefactors and so on were able to be edified.³³⁶

We observed a similar sentiment expressed in the ideal conjunction of religious activities described earlier in this chapter, when we saw how Shardza's center at Getang was designed to bridge traditional gaps in Tibetan religious training by combining scriptural study and exegesis (*bshad*) with Tantric practice (*sgrub*) and meditation (*sgom*). On the whole, such efforts at synthesis and comprehensiveness position Shardza as an inclusive, well-balanced figure.

A similar portrait emerges from the discussion surrounding another important rubric the texts employ—a conceptual division based on what can be called Long Lineage (*ring*

³³⁶ PSTS 61.

brgyud) and Near Lineage (*nye brgyud*). For Tenpé Gyaltzen, Long Lineage refers to a 'vast, unbroken, and long-standing' religious system that includes cycles of Secret Mantra (*gsang ngags*) and early Great Perfection texts, known as the Mind Discernment (*sems phyogs*), that the tradition traces back to canonical Bön scriptures described as the Word (*bka'*) and the Southern Treasure (*lho gter*).³³⁷ These authoritative and temporally-distant sources are then contrasted against so-called Near Lineage material, which represents a more temporally-proximate and accessible 'descent of the Word' (*bka' babs*), made possible through visionary experiences (*dag snang*) and treasure revelation.

In the case of this division, Tenpé Gyaltzen locates Shardza as a representative of the Long Lineage, first and foremost, placing him squarely in line with the orthodoxy. For example, in explaining Shardza's relationship with the treasure-revealer Sangngak Lingpa, he writes: "From the perspective of the Near Lineage...it is appropriate to say that Shardza was a student of the great *tertön*; however, from the perspective of the Long Lineage... the great *tertön* was a student of Shardza."³³⁸

Yet while this passage affirms Shardza's affiliation with the Long Lineage and his ability to transmit it, it also confirms that he was a recipient of recent, Near Lineage revelations as well. Indeed, Tenpé Gyaltzen admits that the nomenclature utilized to characterize some of Shardza's work could vary depending on one's vantage point. In the case of the *Kusum Rangshar*, for example, which resulted from a combination of Sangngak Lingpa's treasure and Shardza's compositional arrangement, he relates that "Shardza said, 'There is no contradiction whether one classifies it as Long Lineage or

³³⁷ NBT 258.5.

³³⁸ NBT 281.1-3.

Near Lineage."³³⁹ It would thus appear that Shardza was comfortable working with both of these types of material, and did not view either categorization as inherently problematic.

However, a different attitude is portrayed when the question arises as to whether the products of Shardza's own esoteric insights might themselves be formally promoted as Near Lineage materials. The reader may recall that Shardza reported religious experiences that led directly to his writing, which he later admitted to his biographer were tantamount to Mind Treasure (*dgong gter*). These potent experiences, taken together, were significant and substantial enough to have constituted Shardza's own distinctive Near Lineage transmission. Indeed, Shardza reportedly conceded that it might have been permissible to transmit the material that had effortlessly descended into his consciousness as a Near Lineage (*bka' babs nye brgyud*), and his biographer commented that "if he would have disseminated this scriptural tradition by making it into a system of a Near Lineage, I think that it would have had a blessed power and that it would have been exceptionally valuable."³⁴⁰ While Tenpé Gyaltzen writes that some rumors apparently circulated about the limited existence of such a lineage, he adds that Shardza ultimately warned against creating one:

Shardza said to me, "Nowadays, without being able to utilize the pure stream of nectar that is the Long Lineage of canonical Word (*bka'*) and Treasure (*gter*), conceiving something through haughty pretense as a Near Lineage spreads a counterfeit Bön. And those who are hungry for power over the teaching, even though they have no authentic lineage source, are placing little importance on even the mere existence of an unbroken continuity of

³³⁹ NBT 259.2-6; PSTS 90.

³⁴⁰ PSTS 85.

initiation and transmission. There is a great danger this will lead to its abandonment. Because of the predominant spectacle of charlatans and their bad habits, if one thus proclaims this type of thing to others, it will be a mistake that causes most people to lose faith."³⁴¹

The biography's adept handling of these debates suggests Shardza was esoterically gifted yet restrained in his outward claims, which would effectively appeal to audience members who had faith in the legitimacy of ongoing revelation while still placing Shardza on the side of Bönpo conservatives. Overall, Shardza himself proved more than willing to admit the possibility of valuable Near Lineage material, as he clearly regarded Sangngak Lingpa's new revelations as authentic. Yet this openness is tempered by his reportedly conscious decision to avoid self-promoting a newly-minted lineage of his own, and his general disdain for those who did so. In this portrait, Shardza's decision to forgo forming a Near Lineage—or publicly describing any of his work as Mind Treasure, for that matter—builds upon a traditional notion of 'skillful means' (*upāya*), demonstrating a flexibility motivated by concern for what would be most beneficial for the greatest number of people. As in the biography's earlier treatment of his relationship to sexual yoga, Shardza eschewed involvement in generating a Near Lineage not because of incapability, but rather because of the dubious precedent it would have established. In other words, the prospective for misunderstanding, exploitation and skewed priorities outweighed any potential for good.

Tenpé Gyaltzen's tireless efforts to position Shardza squarely in the midst of an acceptable middle ground—as a kind of prudent progressive—represents a true hallmark and a consistent thread running throughout his biographies. The ideal that Shardza

³⁴¹ NBT 179.2-4.

embodies emerges from a reconciliation of opposites—a synthesis of meditative practice and scholarly exegesis, of venerable tradition and vibrant new revelation.

As we know both from excellent oral sources as well as Tenpé Gyaltzen's occasional remarks, this approach was necessary because certain Bönpos pejoratively labeled Shardza as an advocate of New Bön—implying that he was too willing to engage (or self-servingly manipulate) the spiritually novel, and to the detriment of established Drasa tradition. Naturally, these charges required a commensurate rejoinder on the part of his disciples, and Tenpé Gyaltzen delivers with bold claims. In response, he emphasizes Shardza's faithfulness to Nyammé Sherap Gyaltzen's legacy in no uncertain terms:

Wondering whether or not some of this precious wisdom of the early dissemination [of Bön] might be propagated and fostered even in a final [cosmic] era such as this one, Shardza attended to the practice of gradual engagement [of the path] in harmony with the general system of doctrine, taking the teachings exclusively into consideration. He later fulfilled the aspiration of the master of the teaching, the Great Peerless Conqueror [Nyammé Sherap Gyaltzen], and genuine evidence of [how] he became a true regent (*rgyal tshab*) [of Nyammé] will subsequently become apparent.³⁴²

The evidence alluded to in this passage refers to Shardza's visionary encounter with Nyammé upon his first pilgrimage to Menri, when he received a special blessing as well as words of encouragement from the founding lama himself, an esoteric event Tenpé Gyaltzen chose to highlight in his abridged text. Elaborating on this episode, Tenpé Gyaltzen later adds:

It seems that the meaning of this is also confirmed in some of [Shardza's] instruction manuals, in which he says [to his disciples]: "Become a beautiful

³⁴² PSTS 28.

ornament of the teaching of the Lord of Menri." Later on the extraordinary power and entrustment of the lama's blessings were granted to him, and he was even asked to perform service which included [composing] practice manuals and a guru yoga text for the precious Lord [of Menri].³⁴³

Given that the toughest criticism Shardza faced came from the Drasa, claims like these are quite meaningful, and appear determined to refute the argument that liberal persons like Shardza fail to remember Nyammé and his heritage. As is evident here, Tenpé Gyaltzen's main strategy for addressing the issue centers on asserting Shardza's deep fidelity to this very personage and his legacy, one that encompasses monasticism, scholarly texts, and ritual and liturgical systems.

In addition, we have also noted occasions in which Shardza reportedly disavowed any real affiliation with New Bön. For instance, he allegedly commented that if the older lineage materials were not conserved, "a couple of New Bönpos" would not come along to "hold the fort" (*sa zin po*). However, other evidence suggests that Shardza did not dismissively write off what some others, including his critics, were labeling as 'New Bön'—a term Rinzin Yungdrung told me was not presently considered a pejorative in his monastery in Kham. In fact, it is doubtful that Shardza rejected the category outright. Indeed, in one exceptional anecdote, Tenpé Gyaltzen goes on the offensive, rather contentiously divulging comments attributed to Shardza implying that the derogatory assertions typically made about New Bön from Drasa individuals stem from self-importance and intolerance. The following episode is recounted in *The String of Wondrous Gems*, and occurred when Shardza was traveling in Gyarong at the age of forty-nine:

³⁴³ PSTS 81.

Except for three mules loaded with books and provisions, Shardza traveled as an ordinary renouncer, and went to a Bön monastery, Gyaltsö Gön (*rgyal gtso dgon*) in a place called Rongmi Drakgo (*rong mi brag mgo*). At that time there were some *geshé* who had come there from Drasa Menri. They looked at Shardza's books, and faith in the lama was produced; they said they wanted him to give the reading transmission for these books, so he did as they wished. For several days he gave the transmission and they had all kinds of discussions.

They, having gone to the Drasa, possessed the authentic tradition of the initiation, transmission and ritual sequences from Menri, and they had well-trained their minds in the five classes of dialectics (*mtshan nyid*), more or less, as well as in Grounds and Paths (*sa lam*) and Mādhyamika (*dbu ma*) from Yungdrung Ling. Then they had requested instruction in Yeru Kharna (*g.yas ru mkhar sna*) and had practiced such things as the Stages of the Path (*lam rim*), Atri (*a khrid*) and the oral tradition of Dru Gyalwa [Yungdrung] (*bru rgyal ba g.yung drung*), and it seemed as if they had understanding and experience. However, Shardza said that it is difficult for those representing the Drasa to show respect for anyone, and they have only a very narrow perspective on Old and New Bön.³⁴⁴

This last, startlingly frank admission attributed to Shardza represents a singular moment of direct criticism aimed at the Drasa, one that at least reflects the candor of Tenpé Gyaltzen if not of Shardza himself. The résumé of these visiting *geshé* may be impeccable, but their patrician attitude and purist standpoint seems to have rendered them rather awkward conversation partners at best. Of course, these were the very type of

³⁴⁴ NBT 293.2-294.2.

persons who were responsible for the polemical letters questioning Shardza's work that would eventually circulate in the Bönpo world.³⁴⁵

Nevertheless, this minor example of irritation with pedantic scholars finds no further detailed expression, and it is quickly augmented with stories designed to persuade the reader that these chilly relations with conservative Bönpos were not the norm. This brief characterization, which clearly hints at the potential for conflict to develop, is supplanted in the end by a more positive image of relations. The most compelling evidence in support of this harmonious vision, one that also powerfully underscores Shardza's properly orthodox status, confronts the reader when one suddenly discovers that Shardza's works were revered by no less a figure than the Menri abbot himself, Puntsok Lodrö (*phun tshogs blo gros*, b.1876). Reserving perhaps his best ammunition for late in the story, Tenpé Gyaltzen writes that Shardza's works "were present in the upper and lower Drasa and were seen in detail by the Menri abbot on this occasion," circa 1925, "engendering awe in his heart" (*thugs la ngo mtshar skyes*).³⁴⁶ At the behest of Shardza's disciple Kelzang Yungdrung (*skal bzang g.yung drung*), the revered abbot composed a verse of supplication to Shardza. In the author's colophon to this short poem, Puntsok Lodrö adds a complimentary statement on Shardza's writings proudly reproduced by Tenpé Gyaltzen. It reads:

³⁴⁵ According to the present Menri abbot, HH Lungtok Tenpé Nyima, his own teacher (and Samten Karmay's uncle) Tenzin Lodrö (*bstan 'dzin blo gros*) as well as the former Menri head teacher Tenzin Namdak's root lama, Tsultrim Gyaltzen (*mtshul khrims rgyal mtshan*) were both directly involved in writing contentious letters on the question of Shardza's alleged 'mixing' of Old Bön with New. His own teacher, who became the Chant Leader under Sherap Loden at Yungdrung Ling, wrote "quite a few, big sheets," while Tenzin Namdak's teacher, who became the Head Teacher at Yungdrung Ling and was described to me as a clever poet, wrote "so many." Eventually Tenpé Nyima's teacher came in close contact with some of Shardza's disciples in eastern Tibet, where he had remained to care for his ailing mother, and after closely reading Shardza's works he "completely changed his mind." As a result, Tenpé Nyima reported getting a favorable impression of Shardza from his teacher.

³⁴⁶ NBT 502.2ff.

This is the intention and meaning of all the Tantras of our Old Bön condensed into one. There is no contradiction with the tradition of Gyalwa Nyammé Lama. It is the essence of the nine profound [vehicles], and thus we respect [Shardza's works] as the crown jewel of the Bönpo. If you make effort at the bodhisattva practice for one lifetime, there is nothing to make effort at that is more profound than this. These words I advise to my students. I offer this in Khyungpo Karu (*khyung po ka ru*), the doorway to Zhang Zhung, in the wood-ox year (1925). May it be virtuous.³⁴⁷

In analyzing this summary statement, one may first note the blunt denial of any contradiction with Nyammé's tradition, a point that suggests such a charge had been made by Shardza's detractors. This emphasis also confirms how central Nyammé's perceived legacy was to notions of Old Bön. Secondly, the brief statement suggests that the Menri abbot may have adopted a softer, more conciliatory stance on intra-sectarian relations in general, or on Shardza's status in particular, relative to his Yungdrung Ling contemporaries. Opinions were hardly uniform among Bönpos with Drasa training, as evidence indicates that there was a diversity of views on Shardza's works even among some very close to the Yungdrung Ling leadership.³⁴⁸

From a literary standpoint, this brief quote represents precisely the kind of evidence the author requires to support his most fundamental claim—that Shardza merited true reverence as a saintly figure in part because he in fact remained within the fold of orthodoxy. Given the context, it was not enough for Tenpé Gyaltzen only to rehearse familiar gestures toward saintly models; at times he felt obliged to directly argue for or against the terms and labels used to situate his teacher and various others within a

³⁴⁷ NBT 502.5-503.1.

³⁴⁸ see n.57.

complex religious framework. In the final analysis, all of this was ultimately aimed at proving to a potentially contentious audience that Shardza embodied the values, ideals and traditions they cherished most.

To a great extent, it seems that Tenpé Gyaltzen's vision was realized. Naturally, detailed ethnographic work on the impact of Shardza's legacy in specific regions—such as Amdo Sharkhog where we met Aku Shöyang—remains to be done. Preliminary indications, however, such as those provided by Tsering Thar, suggest that Shardza's influence and his image have been positively embraced by substantial numbers of Bönpos in contemporary Tibet. As the current Menri abbot remarked, "Nowadays all the young people respect Shardza. All the Bönpos do." Today one even finds Shardza's works regularly consulted by Drasa students and *geshé* at Menri in exile as a supplement to the traditional curriculum, where they are valued for their clarity and accessibility. Since Shardza's death in 1934, the dynamics and priorities within an international Bön community—now spread between Tibet, Nepal, and northern India, as well as Europe and America—have changed dramatically. The previous controversies that swirled around Shardza are now sufficiently resolved so as to render this potentially sensitive project sufficiently innocuous, partly because of continuing efforts among Bönpo leadership to prevent perceived differences from proving unnecessarily divisive in the modern context.

Naturally, it is difficult to assess to what degree Tenpé Gyaltzen's significant efforts as a biographer may have helped to shape opinions and change minds. Yet what is certain is that the biography continues to find readership today. Publishers have seen fit to reprint and circulate the comprehensive biography together with Shardza's collected treatises since the 1980s, and in recent years the two biographies have been produced in modern

book form as well. I am now pleased to present the reader with an English rendering of Tenpé Gyaltzen's abridged version, *The Pleasure Garden of Wish-fulfilling Trees*.

PART II.

TRANSLATION AND CRITICAL EDITION

The Pleasure Garden of Wish-Fulfilling Trees

A Brief History of the Author

The esteemed Kelzang Tenpé Gyaltzen (1897-1959)¹ was born to his father, Orgyan Rinzin²—of the Köpung spiritual lineage within the Ra (*dpra*) clan—and his mother, Tsering Pangmo,³ in the fire-bird year (1897) of the fifteenth historical cycle (*rab byung*).⁴ When he was young he engaged in studies such as reading and writing with his uncle Dogyü Drakpa,⁵ learning without difficulty and reaching the peak of good knowledge. In the presence of the Khenpo Sönam Chödrup⁶ in a monastery in the region of Lakdrak⁷ he learned about the scriptural tradition of the Buddhists, and praise for his learning pervaded all directions.

Arriving at Lumorap,⁸ the [monastic] seat of Trulshik Padma Dödul,⁹ father and son, he heard and reflected upon the scriptural tradition and overcame his misconceptions.

¹ bskal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan.

² o rgyan rig 'dzin.

³ tshe ring dpang mo.

⁴ I have corrected the name of his spiritual lineage from *kod po* to *khod spungs*, based on information in the comprehensive biography and also in the author's colophon.

⁵ mdo rgyud grags pa.

⁶ bsod nams chos 'grub.

⁷ glag brag rjong dgon.

⁸ klu mo rab.

⁹ 'khrul zhig padma bdud 'dul.

Ordained in the presence of the Bönpo monk Tsultrim Chokgyal,¹⁰ he became a "life-tree" among the holders of saffron robes who were unsullied by the stain of negative deeds.¹¹ He attended the Tantric master and Treasure-revealer [from] Walkhyung [monastery], the [holder of] the two sets of teachings, Sangngak Lingpa,¹² who appointed him as his principle doctrine holder.¹³ [2] Studying with many holy lamas of the Non-partisan (*ris med*) movement such as the learned master from Hor, Dragkar Rinpoche,¹⁴ his natural disposition was filled with good qualities and he pursued and aspired to the lives of the erudite and holy. He attended his root teacher, the preeminent lord of siddhas who attained the rainbow body—Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen¹⁵—by way of the three kinds of pleasing action [i.e., material things, service, and practice]. As when one fills a vase to the brim, he received textual commentaries on Sūtra and Tantra in the tradition of the Miraculous Voice¹⁶ that is Everlasting (Yungdrung) Bön; esoteric instructions of the Great Perfection; and textual transmission, empowerment and formal guidance without [any] omission. He thus became the foremost of students held in his teacher's heart.

¹⁰ tshul khriims mchog rgyal.

¹¹ srog shing. Literally, 'Life-tree', this term conjures up imagery of the tree at the center of the world, but by extension connotes that which is central or essential.

¹² gsang ngag gling pa.

¹³ In questioning Bönpo monks, it was not entirely clear to what the designation Tennyi (bstan gnyis) refers. Initially I suspected sets of teachings belonging to both Bön and Buddhism, but given the Nyingma usage of the same term I would guess it refers to Sūtra (*mdo*) and Tantra (*sangs ngags*) or a similar division between exoteric and esoteric material.

¹⁴ brag dkar rin po che.

¹⁵ shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan.

¹⁶ 'phrul ngag. This expression occurs regularly, metaphorically comparing the Bön teachings and tradition with a magical voice, such as that of a Buddha, capable of speaking directly to anyone irrespective of language or other barriers, in a way best suited to help and teach them. The idea is that the Bön teachings even now have the power to train disciples equivalent to that of a Buddha's spoken word.

Due to the efforts he made in the work of teaching and writing for the sake of elevating the uncorrupted teachings of Shardza Rinpoche's practice lineage, centers were established for the study and practice of Yungdrung Bön in Changchub Ling meditation place¹⁷ in lower Nyarong. Fortunate disciples in areas such as Khyungpo, Amdo and Gyarong were drawn together like bees circling around a flower. There came to be many holy clerics who overcame misconceptions with respect to the outer and inner sciences, and the teachings of Shenrap were fostered.

In former times, more than approximately five volumes of his written work were recorded on topics such as Tibetan grammar and poetics; astrology and medicine; spiritual songs providing advice on past and future lives; commentaries on both worldly and spiritual matters; explanations of the realm [geography] of Dzambuling;¹⁸ five methods for responding to questions; the classification of the philosophical tenet systems; a summary of the [Enlightened One's] thought on the two sets of teachings; and instruction on the threefold excellence [which consists of arousing *bodhicitta*, the main practice without reference point, and dedication of merit]. [3] Although the majority of these had been published, now this textual tradition has nearly been lost.

In short, outwardly he was devoid of defilements [accumulated] through ordinary sins or transgressions of his vows with respect to the monastic code. Inwardly, his mind was trained in the Enlightened Attitude (*bodhicitta*) according to the intent of the Sūtra

¹⁷ grub gnas byang chub gling.

¹⁸ Skt. Jambudvīpa, the Southern Continent that is the domain of humans. While India is at its center according to the Buddhist tradition, this is not so for the Bönpo. Olmo Lungring holds that distinction in Bön cosmology.

teachings. Secretly, his three doors [of body, speech and mind] were focused on the essential points of development and completion [stage practices] in the Tantras without leaving anything [merely] as book-knowledge. Ultra-secretly, his view of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) was not based [only] on assumptions, and he was liberated through the quintessential oral instructions. Over the course of his whole life he passed his time teaching, learning, meditating and practicing without remaining for even an instant in distraction or indolence.

Finally, in the earth-pig year (1959), when he was sixty-three years old, his bodily manifestation of the Ground-display demonstrated its nature by dissolving into the Ground's expanse.

* * *

This calligraphy has been done by a spiritual son called Ayung Shenten Tagyé.¹⁹

¹⁹ a g.yung gshen bstan mtha' rgyas.

The Life-story of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen

A wondrous brief and clear narration of the sacred biography of the noble lama—the great and powerful Conqueror from Shardza, the glorious and excellent Tashi Gyaltsen—entitled *The Pleasure Garden of Wish-Fulfilling Trees*. [1]

From the state of emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects
And unchanging great bliss,
He playfully manifested the dance of their unity
In the realm of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. [2]
May the lineage lord, Ökar Nedzin,²⁰ sustain us!

[3] To the one whose reality is like a magical web, the primordial wisdom of the three secrets²¹ of the Buddhas of the three times;
To he who acted as a spiritual teacher of the supreme vehicle playing the role of a monk in degenerate times;
To the one who commands his own realm of disciples by relying upon the vehicle of thorough and complete teachings;
To the second Buddha, the teacher from Shardza, Mangga Werzhi,²² to his feet I bow.

Countless [eons] ago, the two innumerable and unexcelled accumulations [of merit and wisdom] were churned up from the ocean;
Through the sun of his love for living beings in the Dark Age,

20 'od dkar gnas 'dzin. "The Abiding Holder of White Light," this is an epithet of the deity better known as gshen lha 'od dkar.

²¹ gsang ba gsum. The three secrets refer to an individual's body, speech and mind.

²² mangga wer zhi.

The light of his enlightened activity shone in the sky for the teachings and living beings;

The result was a beautiful crown [ornament] for all nine classes of beings together with the gods.

[4] The good qualities of this person are profound and vast.

Although an undertaking such as this is not for one of inferior mind like me,
For propagating a small, partial account of his momentous deeds to foster faith,

Who will disparage me?

Thus fastening to a thread of brief, pithy words
the collection of blue lotuses that make up this wondrous biography,
I will give you this beautiful garland of nicely arranged words and meanings
mixing verse and prose,
As an ornament for the crown of yourself and others. Please accept it!

This glorious, holy lama of ours, who is the presiding lord of all Buddha families and mandalas, is thoroughly renowned as the great powerful holder of the *yungdrung* of definitive reality,²³ the majestic lama Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen, resplendent and pure. Knowing this time to be a dark age, he [nevertheless chose to] manifest himself in the body of a monk endowed with the three [vows]. He spread the sun of the teachings, which are [like] a miraculous voice, in a hundred directions, and he worked to train

²³ g.yung drung 'chang dbang was glossed as indicating someone who had attained their goal (grub pa nges pa), siddhartha in sanskrit.

disciples. I have condensed this story of his liberation in brief [here] so that it might be understood well.

That which was previously composed as *The Garland of White Lotuses, A Supplication in the Style of a Biography*—which was appropriately condensed in succinct chapters—is being used here as the root text.²⁴ As a kind of 'meaning commentary' (*don 'grel*) on that [root text], I will give a little description that is true to life, avoiding exaggeration. [5] This will include two parts: 1) a narration of the biography in order to demonstrate [Shardza's] good qualities; and 2) a prayer for the purpose of fulfilling people's needs, aims and wishes.

The first part will include three further sections: 1) A short biographical sketch from the perspective of the Ground of his emanation; 2) A comprehensive biographical presentation of the events of this life; and 3) A brief conclusion with an explanation of what occurred after his passing.

Regarding the first section [Shardza's emanation from the Ground]: A long time ago this holy, noble lama produced the thought of supreme enlightenment (*bodhicitta*), and he then amassed the accumulations [of merit and wisdom] and purified his obscurations. Achieving the exalted status of a Buddha, he dwelt as a great being who had acquired the power for spreading enlightened activity capable of training anyone in whatever way is appropriate, [which he did] for the sake of disciples.

²⁴ Thus far I have found no indication that a text by this name is extant. The monks I worked with on this translation suggested that *The Garland of White Lotuses*—the so-called root text—refers to the verses that punctuate the narrative biography. This is certainly plausible given that Tenpé Gyaltzen tells us in the comprehensive edition that he first wrote verses in praise of his teacher and then later was urged to compose a biography.

As for the way this occurred, there are two aspects: 1) The way in which he directly awakened in primordial space; and 2) The way in which he emanated from that primordial space and trained sentient beings. Regarding the first, it is said:

Primordially pure, all-pervasive essential nature of awareness;
 Natural radiant light, blissful energy of primordial wisdom;
 Boundless source for the playful taming of anyone;
 I supplicate to the lama, the essence of the three bodies.

This holy and majestic one, whose primordial wisdom was aware in the original expanse—the basis of definitive reality²⁵—was free from the fetters of dualistic grasping. [6] Having perfected all the good qualities associated with renunciation [of faults] and realization [of virtues], he awakened [to a state] not different from that of the All-Pervasive Lord, the Primordial Master. He remained at one with all the Victorious Ones of the three times and their intention, in a state which neither combined nor separated body and primordial wisdom. Thus he became a source for the boundless diffusion of diverse, ocean-like multitudes of bodies and Pure Lands as well as of enlightened activities which trained anyone in whatever way was appropriate. In a Tantra it is said:

This natural, primordial Buddha-body,
 Is unsurpassed, exalted great purity;
 The majestic being who is three [bodies] in one
 Has the power of inconceivable activity.

²⁵ nges pa'i don. What I have called 'definitive reality' in this context my informant glosses as emptiness, and seems similar in intent to 'ultimate truth' (don dam pa).

Regarding the second topic—the way in which [Shardza] emanated from primordial space and trained sentient beings—it is said:

With love for sentient beings from many aeons (*kalpas*) ago,
 In the guise of Siddhas, Knowledge-holders (*vidyādhara*s), Bodhisattvas and
 the like,
 Endowed with enlightened activities, he performed²⁶ a multiform dance.
 To the lifetime-to-lifetime continuity of his sacred spiritual lineage,²⁷ I
 supplicate.

Without wavering from within the state of the Reality Body—the Ground's Expanse—the compassionate teacher Shenlha Ökar²⁸ rose up in bodily form in the miraculous display (*rnam rol*) of the Enjoyment Body from the natural luminosity which radiated within the cognizant aspect of primordial wisdom—the Ground's Manifestation (*gzhi snang*)—and he acted for the welfare of extraordinary disciples. [7] From there, for the sake of ordinary disciples, [he acted] in accord with what it says in Sūtra: "Relying on skillful methods and compassion, he appeared everywhere for the benefit of beings." In this way did [Shardza] generally display himself in the manner of [figures] such as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in accord with disciples' devoted aspirations, in order to train anyone in whatever way was appropriate. Taking infinite births as beings both pure and impure, he accomplished his disciples' welfare. Therefore, the way that this was done is

²⁶ nyer bzung. Literally, 'to hold [a form, or act in a way that is] near to'; thus to act in an approximating way [to a dance], to perform.

²⁷ skyes rabs brgyud. skyes rabs often refers to birth-stories (i.e., jataka tales), but as my collaborator Druksé stressed, the homage is paid not to the stories themselves or to the past, but to the one who presently continues the heritage (brgyud).

²⁸ gshen lha od dkar.

inconceivable, and cannot be stated definitively or ascertained in just one way. In spite of this, I will partially illustrate [how he accomplished this], relating for a while the limited perspective of [several] disciples, in accordance with the truth exactly as it was seen through the wisdom perspective provided directly to me by the Treasure-revealer, the majestic and powerful Siddha, Sangngak Lingpa:²⁹

In the land of Olmo [Lungring] or northern Shambhala³⁰—the place of origin for the Miraculous Voice which is Bön—in the presence of our teacher, the supreme guide Shenrap Miwo, there was a great Bodhisattva [i.e., Shardza Rinpoche] in the form of a pure monk.³¹ In the midst of one-thousand five-hundred Arhants, he took lofty rebirth through his good qualities and even now dwells in the Eastern Continent of Superior Body (Skt. *pūrvavideha*) as the Noble One called 'Joyful'³² as one among the sixteen great Elders (Skt. *sthavira*), sustaining the teachings.

Having been duly established in the deportment of a calm and gentle [Bönpo] monk (*drang srong*) in the presence of the heir³³ of the Victorious One [Tonpa Shenrap],

²⁹ gsang snags gling pa.

³⁰ For Buddhists, northern Shambhala is contrasted to the Southern Continent; for the Bönpos, the thinking is that the two are equivalent, as India is not the preeminent continent.

³¹ drang srong gi tshul la gnas. [Drukse reports that this expression communicates taking ordination, rather than simply dwelling or remaining (gnas), here. I have not been able to confirm this meaning through dictionary work. An important piece of evidence indicating a meaning other than 'dwelling' for gnas is provided below, where the honorific term gzhugs is used to for this purpose for the same subject.] Later he expressed doubts about 'taking ordination', as the English suggested he was only becoming a novice...

³² dga' wa 'dzin. This name should be understood to refer to the elder generally known as shes rap dga' 'dzin.

³³ gdung sob. gdung here has the sense of succession or descent from the Conquerer Tonpa Shenrap, while sob literally means 'stuffed'. Druksé used the wonderful analogy of a stuffed tiger, which looks like but is not quite the real thing. Similarly, Mucho Demdruk is not the literal, physical heir of Tonpa Shenrap, but acts as such for all intents and purposes. NBT gives this and also gdung 'tshob, 'successor'.

Mucho Demdruk,³⁴ he was [also] known as the Bodhisattva Yungdrung Palchok,³⁵ who became the leader of an assembly of three-thousand six-hundred Arhants. He appeared in Omei Shan³⁶ in China and spread the teachings. [8]

As the famous [Buddhist] monk (*dge slong*) Kunla Pakmé,³⁷ who took the form of a Bodhisattva and a Hearer (Śrāvaka) at the feet of the Blessed Shakyamuni in India, he enjoyed the good qualities of spiritual training and he tamed a great city.³⁸

In the Land of Snow, he was accepted as a follower of Chimé Gyalwa,³⁹ father and sons, and he became one among the Four Men [known as] Great Translators and *paṇḍitas*. He was called the Siddha Shari Uchen⁴⁰ or Palden Sangchen⁴¹ and became the crown ornament for millions of learned and accomplished ones in Tibet.

³⁴ mu cho ldem drug.

³⁵ g.yung drung dpal mchog.

³⁶ rgya nag o mi shan. Known as glang chen 'gying ri in Bön sources, this sacred site is associated with tshe dbang rig 'dzin and is an important pilgrimage center both for Chinese Buddhists as well as contemporary Bönpos. cf. Huber 1998, n.19.

³⁷ kun la dpag med. The NBT elaborates, providing the alternate identity of kun dga' bo or Ānanda.

³⁸ yangs pa'i grong khyer 'dul ba. An alternate reading here is possible, in which yangs pa is understood as an abbreviation for yangs pa chen, the Indian city of Vaiśālī. But as none of the versions of the biography at our disposal gives yangs pa chen, I have decided to relegate this alternative to a footnote. Nonetheless, it is certainly possible that the passage intends to celebrate Ananda's role at the Vaiśālī Council, or perhaps has confused a later council in connection with Ananda's famous recitation of the Sūtras.

³⁹ 'chi med rgyal ba. This term is synonymous with bla chen yab sras or dren pa yab sras, which refers to the triad of Drenpa Namkha ('dren pa nam mkha'), Tsewang Rinzin (tshe dbang rig 'dzin) and Padma Tongdrol (padma mthong grol).

⁴⁰ Both condensed versions of the biography give Śrī u chen for sha ri u chen; however, the expanded biography as well as lists of Great Translators and Scholars in Bönpo histories (cf. Tenzin Namdak, introduction to mdzod phug, p. 8) give the latter. I have opted for what more often appears in other Bönpo sources, despite the fact that Śrī is almost certainly intended given his Tibetan alias dpal ldan gsang chen.

⁴¹ dpal ldan gsang chen.

As the widely renowned master of the yoga of ultimate truth (*nges don*) in Menlung Chetang,⁴² the miraculous, great Treasure-revealer Zhetön Ngödrub Drakpa,⁴³ he held the secret treasury of the transmitted precepts (*bka'*) of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*), the highest summit of [spiritual] vehicles.

In the region of Ü,⁴⁴ he was accepted as a follower by the Sky-goer goddess (Skt. *ḍākinī*) Karmo Chenchik,⁴⁵ and he held the nectar of the instructions of the Oral Transmission (*snyan brgyud*). He was called Martön Gyallek⁴⁶ or Mankongwa Kunzang Drowa'i Gonpo.⁴⁷ He refined the Enlightened Motivation (Skt. *bodhicitta*) to perfection, and he visibly raised up the brilliance of the two accomplishments.⁴⁸

In Gyalmorong,⁴⁹ he was renowned as the Great Siddha from Dzowo,⁵⁰ Sherap Yungdrung Drakpa or Rikpa Rangshar,⁵¹ a holder of the unsurpassed Oral Tradition (*snyan brgyud*) of the Great Perfection. He was a great yogin who, in this very lifetime,

⁴² sman lung bye thang. The expanded version gives sman lung bye thang lho brag mkho mthing (NBT 29.3). The subject (dngos brug grags pa) was born in lho brag in sman lung bye thang, and discovered treasure texts of both Nyima and Bön varieties in the 'treasure site' (gter gnas) of lho brag mkho mthing. cf. NBT 29.56ff.

⁴³ bzhad ston chen bo dngos brug grags pa.

⁴⁴ dbus phogs. In NBT, we learn that he was born in dbu ru (30.5).

⁴⁵ mkha' 'gro dkar mo spyang gcig. She is one of the mkha' 'gro rigs lna described in Bönpo sources. I'm told these goddesses are listed in the text known as the mkha' 'dro gsang chod.

⁴⁶ mar ston rgyal legs.

⁴⁷ sman kong ba kun bzang 'gro ba'i dgon po. sman kong bya ba is referred to as a place where he stayed for a long time (cf. NBT 31.1).

⁴⁸ grub gnyis. This expression could refer to the two types of siddhi (common and ultimate, mchog mthun dngos grub), referring to yogic powers and Buddhahood, respectively. However, the phrase is not common and my collaborators were not sure if this reading was correct.

⁴⁹ rgyal mo rong. He is described as generally hailing from shar phyogs rgyal mo rgya yi rong chen.in NBT, and he was born near dmu rdo (NBT 31.6-32.1). shar phyogs rgyal mo rong is famous as the birthplace of mnyam med gshes rab rgyal mtshan.

⁵⁰ rdzo bo grub chen.

⁵¹ shes rab g.yung drung grags pa'm rig pa rang shar.

pursued the limit of what is primordially established⁵² through the essential path of ultimate truth (*nges don*).⁵³ [9]

In the land of Gyarong,⁵⁴ he was called the Siddha Atok Karpo,⁵⁵ the seeker of supreme accomplishments (Skt. *siddhi*) who was born in the Trochen lineage.⁵⁶ He performed the incomparable kindness of raising the flag of the teachings in the borderlands.⁵⁷

In Mongolia,⁵⁸ celebrated by the name of Monlam Rinchen⁵⁹—who was a hidden yogin whose meditative experience and realization overflowed from within—he was established in the deportment of a great Bodhisattva and renunciant⁶⁰ and he became a great being promoting enlightened activities beneficial to all who encountered him.

These [examples] are [given] just as they occurred in his collection of previous births. But if we get a glimpse of these sacred biographies individually, it seems as though they are connected to almost all of the birth-stories of the Buddhas in [this world of] the

⁵² *gdod ma'i grub mtha'*. Ponlob Trinlé Nyima glossed this as *gzhi rang byung ye shes*, and made it clear at least that *grub mtha'* should not be read as 'philosophical system' or the like; rather we might break it down as 'the limit of what is primordially established'.

⁵³ *nges don snying po'i lam*. A pithy statement that seems designed to summarize a line in NBT (32.3) in which 'the ultimate radiant light of the truth of the teachings of all the secret, highest Tantras was born in his mental continuum'.

⁵⁴ *rgya rong*. NBT (33.1) adds more place description, saying that he was a great yogin in *shar rong nam dag*.

⁵⁵ *a tog dkar po*.

⁵⁶ *khro chen gyi gdung*. NBT (33.2) gives *khro chen du dam pa khyung 'phags khro mo'i gdung brgyud*. It also gives *mdo khams smad du khro chen gdung*.

⁵⁷ *mtha' 'khob kyi yul*.

⁵⁸ *sog po*. NBT gives *sog yul lha brag dkar bo'i them tshang* in one place, and later simply says *gangs cen gyi byang shar sog bo'i yul* (NBT 34.2-3).

⁵⁹ *smon lam rin chen*.

⁶⁰ *kun spang*. Literally one who has 'abandoned all'.

Southern Continent (*'dzam gling*). Thus, no one is able to elaborate all the aspects of each and every one.

In addition, if we take up the perspective of [Shardza's] secret [life, it is said that] Tromshen Chenbo Serthok Cecham⁶¹ bestowed blessings [upon Shardza] and [that Shardza] was definitively known to be the supreme incarnation of the great lama Drenpa [Namkha]. As I shall explain below, this is the case because of what we know from the unchanging (*g.yung drung*) prophecies (*lung*). Moreover, it is certain that [Shardza] is also the miraculous manifestation (*rnam rol*) of the lord of sentient beings, Tsewang Rinzin. [10] [This is because] in the prophecies of the great Treasure-revealer Dechen Lingpa, [Shardza] is presented as Tsewang Rinzin, the Lord of the Lineage (*rigs bdag*), and in the context of the chronicle [provided] in [the text known as] *The Decree of the Three Roots*,⁶² he is placed as the miraculous manifestation (*rnam rol*) of Tsewang Rinzin. Although this is the case, the revered lama [Sangngak Lingpa] himself said directly and authoritatively to me in person that "[this is] non-contradictory." The miraculous manifestations of those who act for the welfare of the difficult-to-train are tremendously vast.

However, you may wonder: is it non-contradictory to assert Drenpa [Namkha] and Tsewang [Rindzin], father and son, as a family line within a single mental continuum? If you do wonder, [consider] what sorts of things are said [in scripture]: "The three, Drenpa

⁶¹ phrom bshen chen po gser thog lce 'byams. phrom is a place name; this individual is listed among the six or eight most important scholars in Bön tradition. In the list of six, he is accompanied by three others from Tagzig, and one each from China and India.

⁶² rtsa gsum bka' babs.

[Namkha] and his sons exist as body, speech and mind." The Victorious Ones, being of 'single taste' (*ro gcig ba*) in the Essential Sphere (*ngo bo'i byings*), are not individually separated. But in terms of how they appear, they display themselves in accord with the devotion [of sentient beings] in millions and millions of miraculous manifestations, through the power of their compassion. Therefore, one cannot ascertain sameness and difference like an ordinary person does. But whatever the case may be, by means of the truth which is non-contradictory, one should have faith in the inconceivable nature of the Noble Ones' sacred biographies. In such a way have the teachings of the Buddha been spread in the world of disciples and disciples liberated. Additionally, [Shardza] has unveiled a limitless garland of past-life stories in which he gave comfort [to others] while in high positions known to all. Through the light of his enlightened activities—knowledge, meditative accomplishments, and the splendid brilliance of good qualities capable of wisdom and love—his deeds pervaded [all] lands without exception.

[11] The Abiding Reality that is suchness, our primordial nature,
Awakening into the peaceful Expanse free from mental fabrication,
Far beyond the sphere of changeable mental creations,
It is the inconceivable miraculous play of primordial wisdom.

Marvelous compassion—the face of the beautiful, majestic mountain (Meru);
Emanations to subdue anyone—the sun and moon as an ornament—placed
thereupon;
Deeds clearing away the darkness of the Four Continents of worldly beings;
These are the shining light of enlightened activities—maturing and healing
sentient life.

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

Concerning the second [section]: a comprehensive presentation of the biographical events of this life [of Shardza], there are two aspects. These consist of: 1) an extemporaneous narrative that is brief and succinct; and 2) a comprehensive exposition recounting each and every aspect [of his life]. As for the first:

To the treasure who has the knowledge, love and capacity of the Buddhas of the three times,

To the one who appeared like a monk endowed with the three qualifications amassed in one [place],

To the beautiful ornament of Shenrap's teachings in degenerate times,

To the feet of that one—Mengga Werzhi—I supplicate.

[12] So it has been said. Beyond this, on the present occasion [let us add that Shardza was] a friend to those with whom he was not familiar, including [all] living beings and [even] the gods; a sun illuminating the ocean of Shenrap's unbiased teaching on Sūtra and Tantra;⁶³ and a possessor of the magical wisdom body of all the Buddhas and their spiritual sons. The flag of his reputation fluttered everywhere in all the directions of the earth, and this majestic lama was a great and mighty holder of the *yungdrung*. Because he had captured the secret treasury of all the Victorious Ones,⁶⁴ he possessed the primordial wisdom that knew directly and without confusion the nature of the seeming and the real existence of things just as they are and in all their multiplicity. Unbiased with regard to the welfare of [both] the teachings and living beings, and endowed with a loving

⁶³ mdo sngags ris med kyi gshen bstan. The meaning seems to be that Shenrap's teachings do not favor or privilege one type of teaching (e.g., Tantra) at the expense of another.

⁶⁴ 'Secret' (gsang ba) here, as it was near the beginning of the biography, may be glossed as referring to the Buddhas' secret body, speech and mind.

compassion that was without prejudice, he dwelt as a great being who thoroughly perfected the dynamic power of enlightened activity capable of overcoming all types of demons and their kin.

At this time, relying on the fully perfected teachings, he arose in the aspect of a spiritual teacher of the Supreme Vehicle for the sake of supporting disciples: outwardly, because of his vows of individual liberation, he was a Venerable One; inwardly, because of his Bodhisattva vows, he was of gentle temperament; and secretly, because of his Tantric vows, he had the confidence of the realization of the view. Displaying the form of a monk endowed with the three [vows], in these degenerate times [he practiced] the long path—the Sūtra vehicle of definitions; the short path—the Tantra vehicle of skillful methods; [13] and the quick path—the Great Perfection vehicle which is unsurpassed.

Relying on the shoulder of miraculously-arisen renunciation, realization and enlightened activity, he fully hoisted the great victory banner of the precious teachings of Shenrap—the thoroughly complete, unbiased teachings of the Victorious Ones—to the summit of the world. In this final aeon, with respect to the Miraculous Voice teachings of Shenrap, he spread enlightened activities just like the Second Teacher, [Nyammé Sherap Gyaltzen].⁶⁵ His myriad skillful and ingenious actions beneficial to whomever he met manifested like the beauty of springtime, directly and indirectly connecting disciples to the states of liberation and omniscience. Thus his kindness and compassion were even greater than that of other spiritual guides (*'dren pa*).

⁶⁵ mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan.

The second aspect—a comprehensive exposition recounting each and every aspect [of his life]—has two further subdivisions: 1) the way in which genuine prophecies were made; and 2) the way in which [Shardza] came to benefit living beings in accordance with the prophecies. Taking up the first [of these subdivisions], it is said:

To the guide who will shine like the sun in the Land of Snow,
 To the one who will emerge from the east of Dokham⁶⁶ in future times,
 To the one whose activities are the dawn of infallible prophecy
 Engendering the faith of gods and men,
 To him, I supplicate.

From the perspective of what the future name and setting will be like of our guide—this incomparable compassionate master—it has been conclusively established through credible prophecies beyond dispute that "he will act for the benefit of the teachings and sentient beings." [14] As it was said in the prophecies found in the *Sidpa Gyügyi Khachang*,⁶⁷ which are revealed treasure teachings (*gter*) of Khöpfung Lodrö Thokmé Tsal:⁶⁸ "It has been spoken directly by the immortal Drenpa Namkha: 'From my supreme emanation, one will emerge who is touched by the light rays of Tromshen.⁶⁹ He will have the name Tashi from Da,⁷⁰ and his enlightened activities will reveal the Tantras of Bön.'"

Regarding the first segment of the prophetic verse, there are two [lines, which indicate that] he will be a miraculous manifestation of Drenpa [Namkha] and he will be

⁶⁶ mdo khams.

⁶⁷ srid pa rgyud gyi kha byang.

⁶⁸ khod spungs blo gros thogs med rtsal.

⁶⁹ phrom gshen.

⁷⁰ brda la bkra shis.

blessed by Tromshen Serthok Checham.⁷¹ The third line indicates that he will take birth somewhere called 'Da', and this refers to so-called 'Dakhog', which is located within what is called the three places of Da, Nyi and Sé.⁷² [Shardza] was born near the mountain of Da in the mountain range of Dagang Ringmo⁷³ or in Madzagang⁷⁴ near the river of Sharda.⁷⁵ As for having the name Tashi, this was in fact his name.⁷⁶ Regarding the fourth line, the foremost of all his enlightened activities was the spreading of the Kanjur and Tenjur, along with secondary teachings, concerning the section on the Bön of Tantra, and he acted like a protector of the teachings. The fifth line refers to the iron-dog year (1910) near the nadir of the temporal cycle, when in accord with the prophecy a foreign army arrived in Tibet. [15] At this point there were gains and losses [on both sides] in the conflict between the army of the Chinese black-helmeted To'u Than Trota Zhun⁷⁷ and that of the [men of the] white turbans from western Tibet.⁷⁸ [Shardza] had the power to overwhelm the cruel barbarians with his glory, and he was a hero caring [for beings] at the nadir of this aeon. Thus, vastly expanding his Enlightened Motivation, he performed

⁷¹ phrom gshen gser thog lce 'byams. NBT adds that this prophecy may also be correctly interpreted to mean that the individual is to be blessed both by this individual and by a figure known as phrom ge sar, alias ge sar ngam pa lce ring (48.12).

⁷² brda snyi bse gsum. NBT gives bsda rather than brda.

⁷³ zla sgang ring mo.

⁷⁴ rma rdza sgang. This name and the alternative which is given in the following note refer to one of six ridges (sgang drug) located between the two rivers, in this case the zla chu and the rma chu. TDCM spells this place, incorrectly, it would seem, as dmar rdza sgang (cf. n).

⁷⁵ shar zla. This is equivalent to the zla chu, and is one of four rivers (chu bzhi) in flowing down through eastern Tibet. cf. n.

⁷⁶ NBT indicates that when Shardza was young dbra sprul rin po che predicted that Shardza would receive such a moniker, and this came to pass when stag rtse mchog sprul g.yung drung dbang rgyal later gave the name (cf. 48.34).

⁷⁷ rgya thod nag to'u than kro ta zhun. NBT gives ya krug do'u than kro ta zhun.

⁷⁸ During this year, the Luchun army arrived in Lhasa, a regent was appointed, and the 13th Dalai Lama fled to India (TDCM, p. 3288). This is also the period when the Chinese army under Chao Erhfang was active in Khams, trying to secure more territory in the hope of settling Chinese and creating a new province known as Sikang.

some wrathful activities. As a result, he gradually prevailed over the discord associated with the foreign invasion.

[Additionally], when he was sixty-one years old, at the crossroads of Dza and Ting,⁷⁹ he suppressed with a life-stone and an effigy (*lingga*) a host of demons in order to newly construct the monastery Tengchen Dongak Yungdrung Tengyé Ling⁸⁰—rekindling a fire in the vital place where the sky, the earth and the mountains come together to form a triangle. Having well-established the foundation for a great temple for the Loving Goddess, [Chamma], the path upon which the demons habitually traveled was cut off. In Tibet, he protectively displayed enlightened activities that nurtured and restored the teachings of Sa[kya], Ge[luk], and Nying[ma], along with those of Kar[ma Kagyü], Druk[pa Kagyü] and Bön.

Generally speaking, it certainly seems that there will be many who come [in the future] who draw out presumptuous resemblances in prophecies by relying on only a name. One should keep in mind how prophecies such as this one are unquestionably amazing, clarifying such things as [the predicted person's] locale, his activities and how he benefited beings. In such a manner the prophetic treasure of Sangngak Lingpa says: "The emanation of Shari whose name is Tashi/ establishes whomever he meets on the path to liberation;" and, "in the land of eastern Dza (*sharrdza*), there will be one named

⁷⁹ rdza ting gnyis kyi mdor.

⁸⁰ steng chen mdo sngags g.yung drung bstan rgyas bling. see map for location. {here we can include the story of its destruction by geluk monks and restoration, via the patronage of the 13th Dalai Lama}

Gyaltsen/ a yogin with the accouterments of a Zhikpo,⁸¹/ a guide to the realms of great bliss for whomever he meets, /whose ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions]⁸² are as vast as the sky." [16] Thus concludes this clear prophecy. Still more [clearly] should one understand [Shardza] to be the great being in boundless biographies of noble men whom many predicted.

Brought near by the springtime of disciples' merit,
The summer brilliance of the Holy Guides' three secrets dawns;
As a sign of its advent, a sacred prophetic symbol:
A young cuckoo, arriving as a delightful guest!

The eternal speech of the Omniscient Ones of the three times,
The great drum exhorting in time unerring,
The melodic sound praised in the assembly of all beings together with the gods,
This is the essential elixir (*rasa*) for the ears.

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

Part two: how [Shardza] acted for the welfare of sentient beings in accord with the prophecy. This consists of three [aspects] in reality: 1) his outer biography, commonly

⁸¹ zhig po. From what I could gather, this term refers to individuals generally wearing long hair and acting as lay Tantric practitioners. Druksé mentioned that this corresponds with the early life of Shardza, in which he had such an appearance and lifestyle for a time, before becoming a monk. There are 18 famous zhig po of mdo khams, nine of whom are identified clearly in Bön texts. For more information, see below.

⁸² smin grol. These refer to the results produced by the empowerments which ripen one's being and thereby unlock the capacity to realize the Buddhabodies, and the liberating oral instructions that enable one to develop the insight introduced through the empowerments.

known to all; 2) his special inner biography; and 3) his secret biography, which is even more extraordinary than the [others]. [17] The first, [his outer biography,] consists of two parts: the explicit [narrative] and a synopsis of its significance. The first [of these two, the explicit narrative,] will be further elaborated in eight [parts, namely:] 1) how he took birth as a human being; 2) how he awakened the dynamic energy of awareness (*rig pa*) and directly traversed the grounds and paths in leaps and bounds; 3) how, reflecting upon the welfare of the teachings, he engaged the path in gradual steps; 4) how he received the nectar of the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] from tremendous spiritual masters; 5) how he then made his mark in meditation practice in solitary places; 6) how, depending on that [practice], he acted for the welfare of the teachings and sentient beings; 7) how, in particular, the work associated with the teachings he left behind was promulgated; and 8) additionally, I will describe his other good qualities, which are immense.

As for the first [of these eight, how Shardza took birth]: This majestic lama himself, without being divergent from the Victorious Ones in ultimate reality, gained mastery over the Victorious Ones' skillful methods, and he did not have the limitation of bounded partiality in his work of training sentient beings. However, [if we look] from the [limited] point of view of a single, individual perspective for a while, [we can say that] he took birth as a human being in this temporal life, and [at that time] many auspicious and amazing signs were engendered, delighting the people. There are two ways one might relate [these events]: 1) how he took birth in a beautiful body which was like the sun; and 2) how he possessed indicators of his holy nature.

Regarding the first topic [of these two, how he took birth,] it is said:

The visible light of his compassionate concern pervades all of the three realms,

Yet his enlightened activity, like a chariot, proceeds following his intent; [18]

Thus, in the east of the Land of Snow, below Yungdrung Lhunpo [mountain],⁸³

He took rebirth of his own will, and to him, I pray.

Furthermore, I heard the following words [from] a very beautiful document, which proclaims:

Concerning the country in which this holy being intentionally took on the resemblance of human existence: It was in the eastern part of the Land of Snow, the country of Tibet, in the great region that is the lower [or southern] part of Amdo and Kham,⁸⁴ in the eastern part of Nguldza Zalmo'i Gang,⁸⁵ in the mountain range of Dagang Ringmo.⁸⁶ Many, many learned and accomplished beings came [there], and this blessed region was called Dzakhog.⁸⁷ [It was located] in between the gently flowing rivers of Dza Chu⁸⁸ and Da Chu,⁸⁹ in the vicinity of the power place for meditation practice known as Yungdrung Lhunpo [mountain, an area] which was protected by the three [mountain

84 mdo khams smad.

85 dngul rdza zal mo sgang. NBT gives dngul chu zal mo sgangs. This refers to one of the six hills or ridges located between the four rivers which flow down through eastern Tibet, included in the topographical classification known as 'four rivers, six ridges' (chu bzhi sgang drug). The rivers referred to are the 'bri chu, rma chu, rgyal mo ngul chu and zla chu, while the six ridges are the zal mo sgang, tsha ba sgang, smar khams sgang, spo 'bor sgang, dmar rdza sgang, and mi nyag rab sgang ste sgang. (TDCM p. 808). Here the text refers to the first of these, zal mo sgang.

86 zla sgang ring mo. NBT spells this as bsda sgang ring mo, while one local informant wrote sda sgang ring mo.

87 rdza khog.

88 rdza chu.

89 brda chu; NBT gives bsda chu.

ranges] of Gyer, Za and Ché⁹⁰ [and their associated guardian deities]. [Here], on the side of the mountain range called Da was a village that was [to become] his sphere of activity. His father came from the great Hor clan and he was a spiritual guide named Tashi Ga⁹¹ who was of Bön lineage.⁹² His mother, Bolek Jawa,⁹³ came from a good family and was endowed with the signs of a celestial goddess (*mkha' 'gro ma*). In the year of the earth-sheep—[also] called [the year of] accomplishing one's aim (*don grub*)—within the fourteenth Tibetan calendrical cycle (1859), [it appeared] as if his body were released from the womb, visibly appearing like the orb of the moon.

Regarding the second [of these two topics, how he possessed indicators of his holy nature]: [19]

As soon as the beauty and proportion of his moon face dawned,
 Together with wonderous and auspicious signs,
 An irrepressible figure of light came into view,
 Whose holy semblance surpassed the realm of the ordinary.
 To him I pray.

As for the qualities of holy beings: Because they are never separated from the natural radiance of the good qualities with which they are well-acquainted, there were good signs and indications from the moment [Shardza] was born. On a number of occasions when he

90 gyer za mched gsum.

91 bkra shis dga'.

92 bon rgyud 'dzin pa'i dge bsnyen. Literally, a spiritual guide in whose mental or spiritual continuum Bön was held.

93 bo legs bya ba.

was growing up, great religious purity, faith and the expression of compassion were evident in his gentle spirit (*rgyud*). His mind was exceedingly sharp, he had a graceful deportment, and all of what he did with his physical form was applied to activities only of the highest order. Because of his very strong predisposition to rejoice in good qualities from the time of his childhood, he took unusual delight in holding sacred objects and in wearing the attire of a monk, and, assuming the form of a lama, his only play consisted of giving empowerments and explaining the doctrine (*bon*). He also had many kinds of visions and prophecies, saying how he saw this divine form in the sky in such a way, and [from these beings] came words in such a manner.

At the time [Shardza] reached nine years of age, the Lord of Yogins and member of the Ra (*bdra*) clan, the great Siddha Tenzin Wanggyal (or Drenpa Dödul)⁹⁴ spoke directly in this way to [Shardza's] parents: [20] "This son of yours needs to become a monk." When the flower of his words reached the crown of their heads, they replied, "He is our only son. Apart from him we have no others. So we can't [let him go]." Then, not long after, just like the divine admonition [warned], the magnificent [Shardza] all of a sudden became deranged in the midst of [other] children and for many days he didn't eat. Because [these] conditions arose, again his parents went before Drupwang Rinpoche [alias Tenzin Wanggyal],⁹⁵ asking for forgiveness and spiritual protection. He said to them, "This boy is a [person] with good karmic residuum, so if he doesn't enter the gateway of Bön, he will not be of use to you." There was no getting around these words,

94 dbra zhig grub chen bstan 'dzin dbang rgyal lam dran pa bdud 'dul.

95 grub dbang rin po che.

so they duly offered a supplication, anticipating that he would become a monk. When they came home at that point, the dementia also cleared up by itself and he spent many days with an air of contentment. The sweet sound [of the story] that has just been told is nectar for the ears.

Through greatly blessed enlightened activity in this degenerate age,
 In order to bring to light the teachings of the Early Translations,⁹⁶
 In the eastern region, a delightful land of herbal medicines,
 He who possesses the auspicious bodily symbols and marks,
 This foremost of wish-granting [trees], was born. [21]

As soon as the dust on the auspicious wheels [adorning] his two feet
 Initially fell in this land,
 The merit of living beings in their vastness,
 Became like the center of a lucent white crystal
 From which the resulting virtue arose,
 Like patterns of light refracted everywhere.

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

The second topic [of eight], how he awakened to his spiritual heritage and traversed the path in leaps and bounds. Wherever the Great Noble Ones are born, the visible light of their own holy nature—just like the light of gold beneath the ground—can never be

96 sna 'gyur. This term generally refers to the Nyingma School's scriptures, but may here refer to Bön scriptures translated from the ZhangZhung language. {perhaps later episodes will help to clarify this}

suppressed. Thus, from the time he was small, auspicious circumstances (*rten 'brel*) spontaneously converged through which he accumulated what was useful and enjoyable, and he assumed the high status of a great, naturally-born yogin. The way in which this occurred can be discussed in two ways: 1) how he was taken as a disciple of his Tantric master;⁹⁷ and 2) how, having awakened to his sacred spiritual heritage, he encountered self-arising realization.

Concerning the first [of these two topics, how he was taken as a disciple]:

Razhik Drupchen [alias Tenzin Wanggyal]—

The one with the power to transform mind and appearances—

Bestowed blessings and initiation,

Dispelling inner and outer obstacles,

He gave the reassuring prophecy,

"He will become a master of the teachings in the future,"

And to him, I pray.

[22] Razhik Drupchen Rinpoche, a heart-emanation of the immortal, wisdom-holder Lachen Drenpa [Namkha],⁹⁸ was an extraordinary lama who had himself been a Tantric master (*rigs kyi bdag po*) previously in many of the successive lives of this magnificent [Shardza]. By virtue of that, [Shardza] was granted visions on a vast scale from the time he was small, and it was said that he also was a person in whom a naturally strong faith

97 *rigs bdag bla ma*. This term is difficult to translate adequately. It refers to a lama who is the 'owner' or 'master' of a Tantric lineage, or perhaps of a Buddha family, and the semantic range of the term *rigs bdag* suggests, like *khyab bdag*, the image of a principle deity at the center of a *maṇḍala*. My assistant added that the *rigs bdag bla ma*, as the principle individual bestowing Tantric empowerments, teachings, etc., is in many ways of greater importance than the so-called 'root lama' (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*), who could be a less accomplished person through whom one initially (but only) enters the path.

98 *bla chen dran pa*.

arose that did not require persuasion. As soon as [Shardza] was born, [Drupchen Rinpoche] gave many blessings that dispelled obstacles and caused wisdom to descend [upon him]; he established an auspicious link for longevity in connection with a long-life empowerment; and he gave whatever advice was needed.

In particular, on the occasion [Shardza] surrendered himself as a monk in [Drupchen Rinpoche's] presence, [Drupchen Rinpoche] gave him the common refuge vows, offered vast prayers for the benefit of the teachings and sentient beings, and crowned him with the name of Tashi Gyaltsen.⁹⁹ He [also] insistently invoked the general guardian deities and Machig Kasung Lhamo¹⁰⁰ [in particular], and he performed the special entrustment ceremony [for Shardza's protection].

When [Shardza] was twelve years old, he learned to read from his uncle Yungdrung Gyaltsen.¹⁰¹ He was taught seven pages of text, and at that point knowledge came without difficulty. Then, in the presence of Drupchen [Rinpoche] not long after, he requested that he be granted whatever kinds of empowerments, instructions, guidance and transmissions were appropriate. Consequently, Drupchen [Rinpoche] prophesied things to come in the future. He gave instructions to [Shardza] in connection with personal advice, in which [he said] that [Shardza] certainly ought to perform work for the teachings. Thus [he told him that] he should establish himself in the three vows¹⁰² and take the nectar of the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions]. He should strive in meditation practice,

99 bkra shis rgyal mtshan.

100 ma cig bka' gsang lha mo. This protectress was associated with this particular area, but I am told she has become particularly important for the disciples of Shardza and their students.

101 g.yung drung rgyal mtshan

102 sdom pa gsum. These refer to the vows of individual liberation, the vows of a bodhisattva, and the commitments (dam tshig) of the vajrayana.

render service to the teachings and act for the vast welfare of living beings. [Drupchen Rinpoche] also urged him to remember [his former lives].

All at one time, [Drupchen Rinpoche] gave [Shardza] formal authorization (*rje gnang*) by way of a [special] Pu Ti transmission¹⁰³ and empowerment; and he formally named him, with vast words of praise, an "owner of the teachings," thereby according him a special honor that elevated his status. Thus, from this time forward, auspicious circumstances spontaneously converged that awakened the creative energy of awareness (*rig rtsal*) associated with [Shardza's] former training, and he thus enjoyed favorable circumstances in which all the auspicious signs of a good way of life manifested themselves more and more.

Concerning the second [of these two topics; namely, how, having awakened to his sacred spiritual lineage, he encountered self-arising realization]:

From the fortunate link by which he realized the blessing
of the [directly transmitted] mind lineage,
Connected with the power of former training and the supreme Lord of Siddhas
himself,
He awakened the vast energy of awareness through the path of the Supreme
Vehicle. [24]
To the superlative self-manifesting yogin, I pray.

103 pu ti lung. The term *pu ti*, or *po ti*, refers literally to a book or text, and I'm told it here refers to a presentation by the master of the entire text to the student. This is done in lieu of actually reading through the text (or parts thereof), which is common practice in the process of transmission (*lung*), and is thus a rare procedure reserved only for special disciples with the right predispositions and capacity.

This majestic lama [Shardza] was a teacher in whom compassion was manifest from above, and he arrived for the benefit of disciples and therefore was not someone who needed to engage the path with effort like [ordinary] persons who work their way up from below. Due to the enormous effect of the good qualities of the powerful training with which he was familiar from before, there was cause, [or a basis,] for the clear awakening of various kinds of holy qualities such as faith, renunciation, and compassion from the time he was small. And the Tantric master Razhik Drupchen, through the blessings by which he transmitted the mind [of the enlightened lineage], thoroughly awakened the energy of awareness [in Shardza] via the path of the Unsurpassed Vehicle [i.e., the Great Perfection].

In addition, while [Shardza] was living as an attendant of the holy Drupchen when he was young, there was once a time when he took responsibility for invoking the deities in the protectors' room. At that time there was a great drought in the region, and while he was performing his duties for that majestic Siddha [Drupchen Rinpoche], [the villagers] appealed for rain. At that point a sword was given to him and he was ordered to push down the wind. For a while that majestic Siddha [Drupchen Rinpoche] made his whereabouts unknown; then he [suddenly returned,] grabbed the sword away in a violent manner and wrathfully struck [Shardza's] body with great force. As a result, immediately [Shardza] lost consciousness in a faint. He awoke from that and the wisdom mind (*dgongs*) of the ultimate lineage (*don brgyud*) had been transferred to his mindstream; [Shardza himself later] said that because realization equal to that of that majestic Siddha

[Drupchen Rinpoche] became visibly manifest [in him], from then on there no longer arose a distinction in the Radiant Light of day and night.¹⁰⁴ [25]

Thereafter, a fearless confidence with respect to all knowable things burst forth from within [Shardza]. Although he had not studied the literary arts within the [sphere of] ordinary cultural knowledge even a little with anyone else, whenever he looked at all of the scriptural texts, an unimpeded knowledge arose [within him]. Thus, it seems as though from that time on the seeds for the Great Treasuries (*mdzod chen*) of the present day were written down according to circumstances in the form of scattered [notes].

All of the good qualities of the Grounds and Paths were complete in [Shardza's] mindstream naturally or spontaneously from the energy of the wisdom mind (*dgongs*); thus, his lotus feet were established in the supreme status of a self-manifesting yogin without his needing to worry about making effort in such things as deliberate meditation. The wisdom mind became manifest [in him] through the essential path of the Great Perfection, the summit of [spiritual] vehicles; hence, unlike a person capable of [only following] the system of progressive striving on the gradual path, he was thoroughly renowned and established in the yoga of ultimate truth (*nges pa'i don*) as a person who was able to gain mastery over all the vehicles in the nine stages [of Bön], by virtue of the power of his excellent faculties' instantaneous realization. Nevertheless, taking up the practices of the Practice Lineage's forefathers at about that time in a manner that was

104 de nas bzung nyin mtshan gyi 'od gsal la khyad par ma byung. Druksé glosses this reference to the Great Perfection contemplation system as meaning that there was no difference in the clarity of his inner radiant light, which linked to his awareness, regardless of the time or circumstances.

hidden to the perception of others, he dwelt as an ordinary Togden (*rtogs ldan*) who relied upon his long hair and a staff. [26]

By the supreme, powerful and accomplished Tantric master himself,
Immediately after the flowers of auspicious symbols and methods were
scattered,
All kinds of excellent qualities were awakened from [Shardza's] depths
And all the Victorious Ones arrived, speaking of him in sublime expressions.

With the key of fearless Tantric demeanor,
The door was opened to the ultimate secret treasury of former training.
Immediately [Shardza] obtained the exalted state¹⁰⁵ of the supreme unity [of
wisdom and method],
And spontaneously ascended the throne of a self-manifesting yogin.

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

The third¹⁰⁶ topic [of eight]: how, reflecting upon the welfare of the teachings, he engaged the path in gradual steps. Because this holy lord [and] protector [Shardza] was a self-manifesting yogin, he did not need to focus on his own welfare and make effort at entering into the teachings incrementally. Nevertheless, keeping only the teachings in

105 pha phog. Ponlob Trinlé Nyima interpreted this as synonymous with go 'phang in this context, meaning high status; elsewhere it seems to have the sense of the result ('bras bu) of practice.

106 The text here gives gnyis pa ('the second'), but it is clear that the topic corresponds with the third subject of the eightfold division outlined above.

mind during this degenerate age, he engaged the path in gradual steps. There are two ways we might discuss the manner in which he did so: 1) how he rejoiced in gradually engaging the path; and 2) how he sequentially took the three vows.

As for the first topic [of these two]:

Relying on the tradition of the Second Victorious One [Nyammé Sherab Gyaltzen],

In order to induce others [to uphold] the practices of those who came before,
[27]

With the bearing of one who engages the teachings gradually,
He developed amazingly fortunate [disciples].

To him, I pray.

In connection with the prophecy previously [given] by Razhik Drupchen, the time came for [Shardza to act upon] the advice given [by Drupchen Rinpoche]; in addition, the famous Drakkar Dorjé Chang Lozang Tenzin¹⁰⁷ also especially admonished [Shardza] as follows, [telling him] that since he had generated the thought to gradually engage the path, he should actually apply himself accordingly.

In harmony with the meaning of *The Great Prophetic Treasure Chronicle*¹⁰⁸ of the great Treasure-revealer, Sangngak Lingpa, [Shardza] was endowed with the good fortune to be a great Treasure-revealer, and, if he planted the victory banner of meditation practice in solitude in that way, he would possess in his heart the extraordinary ultimate secret by which he could pass away in a rainbow body in this very lifetime.

107 brag dkar rdo rje 'chang blo bzang bstan 'dzin.

108 gter lung bka' thang chen mo.

Nevertheless, it is sometimes said, such as in the oral tradition from which the biography of the second Victorious One, the great Nyammé [Sherap Gyaltshan] emerges, that Drangsong [Lekden] Gyalwa¹⁰⁹ was the master of the precepts of monastic discipline; Sangwa Düpa Zhen¹¹⁰ was the exemplar of the profound Tantric path; and Kuntu Zangpo¹¹¹ realized the truth of the natural state of the Great Perfection. Accordingly and at the appropriate time for him to act [in such a way], [Shardza] guided disciples gradually and led them on the path. Grounded in the ordinary vehicle, he understood how to bring together the path of extraordinary Secret [Mantra] and [Great Perfection] mind [training], and he realized without contradiction all the Victorious Ones' teachings. [28]

He considered that this will be of benefit to all his disciples, and by virtue of that he reflected on the exceptional need for him to be able to spread the precious teachings of Shenrap in all directions, via the unity of teaching and practice. Without covetously looking towards just practicing for his own benefit, he voluntarily assumed the comportment of a shaven-headed, barefoot holder of saffron robes. Wondering whether or not some of this precious wisdom of the early dissemination [of Bön] might be propagated and fostered even in a final [cosmic] era such as this one, he attended to the practice of gradual engagement [of the path] in harmony with the general system of doctrine, taking the teachings exclusively into consideration. He later fulfilled the aspiration of the master of the teaching, the Great Peerless Victor [Nyammé Sherap

109 drang srong [legs ldan] rgyal [ba].

110 gsang [ba] 'dus [pa] gshen.

111 kun tu bzang [po].

Gyaltsen], and genuine evidence of [how] he became a true regent [of Nyammé] will subsequently become apparent.

* * *

As for the second [topic of two: how he sequentially took the three vows]:

Having duly received the grace of the three vows
 From the holy Abbot, the peerless wisdom-holder
 He endeavored in the proper way of adopting [virtues] and abandoning
 [faults].
 To the wisdom-holder endowed with the threefold qualification,
 I pray. [29]

There are three subdivisions of this topic: the first of these concerns how [Shardza] took the vow of individual liberation. From the time he was small, he lived only in a way that was pure and well-mannered; because he carefully observed the general principles of ordinary and extraordinary refuge¹¹² as well as the precepts of the five various vows [kept] by laypeople, he was praised by everyone. In particular, it is said in the *Lha Drel* (*The Commentary of Lha[pön]*):¹¹³ "Not letting your morality deteriorate, obscuration (*sgrib pa*) will be purified! Having purified your obscuration, contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin*) will become clear (*gsal*); having clarified your contemplation, wisdom will be freed." Just so, the principle that morality is the foundation of all good qualities is in

112 Ordinary and extraordinary refuge refers to Lower Vehicle and Great Vehicle understandings of refuge.

113 lha 'bral. This text is a commentary on the *srid pa'i mdzod phug*.

harmony with the intention widely present in all the Words (*bka'*) and Treatises (*bka' rten*) [of the Bön Canon]; [thus,] relying on the precepts of Eternal (*Yungdrung*) Bön, [Shardza] took ordination.

Firstly, the holy Abbot and teacher of Shenrap's doctrines, Kelzang Nyima Toggi Gyaltsen,¹¹⁴ of Yungdrung Ling—an excellent, immaculate branch monastery of the glorious Menri, the seat of the great Nyammé [Sherap Gyaltsen]—arrived in Domé [i.e., Kham] and he met [Shardza]. On that occasion, [the Abbot] was invited to the splendid Dza Tengchen monastery.¹¹⁵ His Holiness, the sacred head of all the elder monks keeping the monastic discipline, was himself presiding at that time. Amidst the pure assembly of Bönpo monks, [Shardza] renounced worldly life and duly requested novice vows.¹¹⁶ [30] At that juncture he was given by the Abbot an ordination name—Tenpa Drukdrak¹¹⁷—which was repeated three times. There was something like an instinctive shock experienced by all who were seated there; as "Tenpa Drukdrak" was pronounced, there was great laughter. The Abbot said that this omen, [the meaning of which] he discerned, was auspicious, and he also gave a prophecy about things to come in the future.

114 skal bzang nyi ma tog gi rgyal mtshan.

115 rdza steng chen dgon dpal gshen bstan 'chi med mdo sngags gyung drung bshad sgrub 'phel rgyas gling.

116 rab tu byung ste gtsang ma gtsug phud kyi sdom pa legs par zhus: while both terms can refer to taking novice ordination, here 'rab tu byung' suggests a broader meaning such as we find in the Sanskrit equivalent pra-√vraj, "to wander forth" from the world into the mendicant's life, and thus usually by extension "to take ordination." gtsang ma gtsug phud is a specifically Bönpo term for the novice vows, which include 25 precepts.

117 bstan pa 'brug grags.

Thereafter, one of the eighteen Zhikpo of Dokham,¹¹⁸ [an individual known as] Takzhik Choktrul Rinpoche, [or] Shengyal Tenzin,¹¹⁹ arrived in Dzakhog. At that time he was invited to the holy temple of [Shardza's] own monastery. [Shengyal Tenzin] was just the kind of person described in scriptures such as the *Dulwa Dortü* (*The Abridged Code of Monastic Discipline*),¹²⁰ which says: "Endowed with morality and well-versed in that [subject]; acting for the welfare of others and capable [of doing so]; from [such a person one should] take [one's vows]." His Holiness was a truly exalted person who demonstrated the marvelous, beneficial qualities of the righteous and learned.

Having been accepted [for ordination] amidst the virtuous assembly of the faithful, which included the head monk, the head teacher, a witness, and a translator, [Shardza] took the vows of a pure, fully-ordained monk (*drang srong*) from Rinpoche himself, in accord with the precept lineage that has been passed down through the continuous, uninterrupted code of discipline of the Lord of Menri [monastery, Nyammé Sherap Gyaltzen]. He was given the ordination name of Tenpa Drukdrag Drimé Nyingpo,¹²¹ [and] he made an offering in thanksgiving to the Abbot and to the monks who took part.

[31]

118 A zhig po refers to "an individual who has overcome the faults of holding things to be truly existent of clinging to what is dear" (cf. TDCM, pp. 2387). While 18 are spoken of in the texts, nine lineages are specifically identified, namely: 'gru zhig, shel zhig, se zhig, sgo zhig, stag zhig, gling zhig, snang zhig, 'khrul zhig and bon zhig. According to Nyima Dakpa, stag zhig mentioned here is still an active lineage, with a present day reincarnation, as is snang zhig, which is, incidentally, the basis for the small Amdo sharpa monastery by that name which in turn provided the foundation for the large, wellknown Amdo ngaba monastery by the same name. He was uncertain about the status of several others, but did believe that the 'gru zhig, shel zhig and se zhig were at least still in existence, albeit rare.

119 stag zhig mchog sprul rin po che gshen rgyal bstan 'dzin.

120 'dul ba mdor btus.

121 bstan pa 'brug grags dri med snying po.

Henceforth, [Shardza] acted purely, behaving in complete harmony with the precepts, such that he would never take beer or wine, accept meat that was killed especially for him, or wear garments of animal skins. Along with the external practice of virtue—such as performing seasonal religious services like the Tsenchak and Chabtor rituals¹²²—and the internal practice of confession in a calm state associated with the three [sets of] precepts, [Shardza] exerted himself diligently in the Sūtra practice of the path of abandonment [of faults], and he possessed the pure conduct associated with the [twelve] ascetic virtues.¹²³

Similarly, from the time he took both the earlier and later vows [of a novice and fully-ordained monk, respectively], his combined vows—the outer 176 observances and the inner 250 precepts, which were totally beyond all the flaws and stains of the four-part transgression, also known as the root infractions of the threefold union,¹²⁴ as well as more general misdeeds—were like a white lotus flower, blossoming ever more and more. Its sweet fragrance, worthy of praise by all living beings together with the gods, completely permeated the whole environment in [every] direction.

* * *

122 *mtshan phyag* refers to a ritual in which the 1,000 names (*mtshan*) of buddhas and enlightened beings are recited, which is performed together with prostrations (*phyag [btsal]*). *chab gtor* refers to offerings of water (*chu sbyin*) and small dough pellets (*gtor ril*) performed for the so-called 'four guests' (*'gron bzhi*), including *sri zhu*, *yon tan*, *lan chags*, and *snying rje*, who respectively represent those one reveres (e.g., the three jewels), those embodying virtue, those to whom one owes a karmic debt, and those who deserve one's compassion.

123 *sbyang pa'i yon tan*. According to the TDCM, these include such things as begging for food, eating one meal a day, staying in isolation, wearing poor clothing, and so forth.

124 *yan lag bzhi kyi pham pa'am sbyor ba sum tshang*. The fourpart transgression refers to the four factors which must be present for a karmic act to be completed, while the threefold union addresses the same topic in terms of three factors. Both maintain the importance of motivation, action and satisfaction with the result for the full consequences of an action, in this case the loss of vows, to take effect.

The second [topic of three, how Shardza sequentially took the three vows], concerns how he took the vow of a Bodhisattva. The precious mind of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) is the powerful seed without which it is impossible to strive to attain the exalted state of omniscience. Although he had perfected his cultivation of the way of [*bodhicitta*] long ago [in former lives], he properly received the Bodhisattva vows for the sake of beings to be trained who would [later] follow him. [32]

In addition, in comparison with the continuity [of the lineage] of Bodhisattva vows that had previously remained uninterrupted, the lineage in [Shardza's] homeland in modern times was on the brink of collapse. Thus, it has come to pass that there is virtually no tradition of [formally] requesting and taking Bodhisattva vows. In that context, reflecting on the continuity of the teachings and applying himself in a great endeavor, he duly received [the vows] in accord with all the [necessary] conditions as they are given in the *Thekchen Lha'i Melong* (*The Divine Mirror of the Great Vehicle*),¹²⁵ in the presence of the peerless spiritual teacher, the son of the Victorious One and great Bodhisattva, Samten Yeshé.¹²⁶ He was given the name Gyalsé Shenphen Norbu¹²⁷ and he was honored and praised. Afterwards, he also duly received [teachings and vows] given in the two Bodhisattva traditions in the Buddhist system¹²⁸ from Dechen Özer,¹²⁹ a

125 theg chen lha'i me long. Composed by rme'u lha ri gnyen po, a work concerning monastic discipline ('dul ba).

126 bsam gtan ye shes.

127 rgyal sras gzhan phan nor bu.

128 shing rta'i srol gnyis. These two traditions refer to the conduct and the view set forth in the Buddhist works of 'phags pa thogs med and mgon po klu grub, which concern the Mahayana vows.

129 bde chen od zer.

student of Doppelri Khyentsé Rinpoche,¹³⁰ and he also received instructions for mind training (*blo sbyang*) on the conventional and ultimate Enlightened Motivation (Skt. *bodhicitta*). In addition, on each of these occasions, vast clouds of offerings including butter lamps and incense and whatever excellent things were available were offered in support of [Shardza's] developing the Enlightened Motivation.

From that time onward, [Shardza] took responsibility for [these vows] in every respect, and, in general, he conducted himself as a Bodhisattva who was unsullied by the defilement of deceitfulness. [33] In particular, [he held] precepts from among the two [Mahayana] traditions, [including] the twenty vows of compassion [associated with the lower Mind-only system]; the four classes of Bodhisattva vows [associated with the higher Mādhyamika system]; the common three hundred and sixty comprehensive [vows]; the middle[length] one hundred and eight [vows]; the condensed twenty-eight [vows], the very condensed four mother-[like basic principles] of *bodhicitta* (*sems bskyed ma bzhi*);¹³¹ and the ultra-abridged [vow] consisting of just one [precept].¹³² In brief, he was unsullied by even subtle types of misdeeds regarding the ethical observances associated with abstaining from wrongdoing, gathering virtue, and accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings. Sheltered by the cool shade of the wish-fulfilling [tree]—the Bodhisattva precepts represented by the Six Perfections and the Four Methods for

130 mdo dpal ri mkhyen brtse rin po che.

131 Most of these classifications are addressed in Shardza's work on the three sets of vows (*sdom gsum*); Ponlob Trinlé Nyima was kind enough to begin explaining the nuances but the details are extensive and in some instances not fully clear. For specialist readers, it was brought to my attention that Shardza identifies these condensed four as consisting of *rig pa ye shes kyi sems bskyed*; *mi chags rtul shugs kyi sems bskyed*; *thugs rje bzhi ldan gyi sems bskyed*; *tshad med zung 'jug gi sems bskyed*.

132 The one precept referred to here is given in Shardza's *sdom gsum* as "to generate the thought of enlightenment having abandoned criticism of oneself and others (*rang gzhan sems gsod spang nas sems bskyed pa*)."

Collecting [disciples]—[Shardza's] stainless conduct, which provided a blissful sigh of relief for himself and all others, was visible to the eyes of everyone.

* * *

The third [topic of three, how Shardza sequentially took the three vows], concerns how he took the Tantric vows. An extensive [description] of how he received the vows connected with Tantra and the unsurpassed Mind [Discernment teachings of the Great Perfection]—the profound short paths in which one attains the state of everlasting bliss by means of the quick path of method, wisdom and bliss without needing to worry about practicing many countless austerities—will be presented below. Here, if we [first] examine his primary initiations, he received the ripening empowerment within the *maṇḍala* of Chipung Walsé Ngampa,¹³³ as well as the ordinary introduction to the nature of mind, in the presence of the incomparably kind Tantric master Razhik Drupchen Tenzin Wanggyal. [34] [Shardza] obtained the transfer of blessings by means of the Gyalthab Chiluk empowerment [the "pouring into the crown of the Victorious One's methods"]¹³⁴ and the energy of the wisdom mind (*dgongs*); thus, the lama was supremely kind, beyond comparison with any other.

In the presence of the Treasure-revealer and crown ornament of millions of different types of Siddhas, the holy wisdom-holder Tsewang Drakpa, alias Dechen Lingpa,¹³⁵ [Shardza] was given the empowerment of the peaceful and wrathful [forms] of Walsé

133 spyi spungs dbal gsas rngam pa.

134 rgyal thabs spyi blugs refers to an empowerment through which the recipient receives the full blessing by which he becomes a fully-authorized representative of the teacher.

135 [rig 'dzin] tshe dbang grags pa'm bde chen gling pa.

[Ngampa] and the uncommon authorization [rite] connected with the Puti oral transmission based on the instructions in the *Özer Pakmé* (*The Infinite Light*).¹³⁶ He [also] was given the empowerment of awareness' energy in the *maṇḍala* of ultimate primordial wisdom. The preliminary practices connected with the Atri [lineage], the oral guidance¹³⁷ on the generation and completion [stage practices for] meditational deity [yoga]; and the personal introduction¹³⁸ to the main practice were also bestowed [upon him], and, having received special blessings, [Shardza] showed the great respect of seeing [Dechen Lingpa] as his supreme teacher. Having entered into the cycle of Tantric ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] illustrated by these [examples, he took the following vows], in accord with what is presented in the Tantras: the individual stages in the [general] Tantric enumeration of the commitments (*dam tshig*); the five basic and twenty-five ancillary commitments of the outer Generation Stage [aspect of Tantric practice]; the five basic commitments of the inner Completion Stage [aspect of Tantric practice], together with the ancillary commitments [consisting of] the [thirty] general vows, the [sixteen] Pombo, the [nine] Nyeché, and the [four] Chepa;¹³⁹ and the thirty

136 For more on the special nature of the Puti oral transmission, see note above; the *Özer Pakmé* (od zer dpag med) refers to a text that is similarly used for a quick, special oral transmission (*lung*).

137 go khrid. A type of introduction or guidance in which the student hears (*go*) or listens to the instructions.

138 zhal khrid. "Instructions [from the] mouth" of the teacher; reserved for special students, and more personalized, also intended to communicate the meditative experience of the teacher.

139 spom po seems to mean something like 'thick', and together with the che ba bzhi (the four great ones), these are closest to the root commitments and their loss is more serious. The nyes byas refer to more general misdeeds, or more minor infractions. [nyes tshab] che ba bzhi refers to four 'great dangers': 1) wrong views (within the tantric system); 2) errors within meditation; 3) changing conduct; 4) to lose the fruit or result (for more on this topic see Shardza's *sde snod mdzod* vol. 2, p. 211, or 209ff. for the whole topic).

commitments and the four effortless commitments of the secret Great Perfection,¹⁴⁰ [and] he was unsullied by the stain of misdeeds with respect to [any of] these. [35]

He continually performed the successive steps of the [ritual] approach and accomplishment of respective meditational deities, did [mantra] recitation, and [made offerings of] ritual cakes (*gtor ma*), and he always remained in the practice of the three yogas.¹⁴¹ He never passed time apart from the wisdom mind of great, ultimate equanimity. Adorned with all sorts of ornaments—the commitments of the great, secret, everlasting (*g.yung drung*) vehicle—he dwelt by means of the ultimate truth as a great hero who naturally ascended to the exalted state of his great, unchanging (*g.yungdrung*) master teacher.

In this way did he gradually enter into the three vows while thinking of the welfare of the teachings and sentient beings. And, relying on the unmistakable method of training as a disciple, he became known as a wisdom-holder endowed with the three [vows] who was able to carry in his practice the thorough and complete outer, inner and secret stages of the teaching in a single mindstream, [and he thus attained] the exalted, unsurpassed crown of fame. By virtue of that, all beings everywhere one-pointedly engaged their three gateways [of body, speech and mind] with faith, aspiration and devoted admiration [for

140 *srung med bzhi*. While remaining in the natural state of mind (*gnas lugs*), the Great Perfection practitioner is without conceptions and does not guard or protect vows, thus they are 'effortless', but one can say that these are 'primordially accumulated' (*ye tshogs*). Thus far we have not been able to definitively identify these four.

141 *rnal 'byor gsum*. No definitive answer was forthcoming concerning the reference intended here. Two possibilities suggested to me are that one, it refers to the exoteric, *nying ma* or possibly *bon gsar ma* division of *mahāyoga*, *anuyoga* and *atiyoga*; and two, that it refers to the three things mentioned just previously in the text: ritual service and practice, recitation and offering (*sevā/sādhana*, *jāpa* and *pūjā*).

him], and thus [Shardza became] a great holy being who was a worthy recipient (*gnas*) of reverence.

With the nectar that is the realization
 Of the two accomplishments in your heart
 Overflowing like a full vase,
 For the sake of disciples in the degenerate era,
 You exhibited the demeanor
 Of one who enters into the teachings gradually. [36]

Having prepared a place
 In the lotus garden of monastic discipline,
 With the radiant, beautiful light of saffron robes,
 And the sweet scent of morality
 That delights the Noble Ones,
 He propagated wonders that inspired
 The swarm of bees that are sentient beings.

With concern for limitless living beings,
 Relying upon the foundational precepts of the Bodhisattva,
 Without being separated from the mode of efficacious conduct
 He became the sole successor of all Spiritual Guides.

He was enthroned
 through the path of skillful means
 as a regent of Walshen, the supremely accomplished one;
 Even still,
 Is that not frolicking at play in a dance,
 with a hundred expressions of illusion,
 Which transform all phenomenal existence
 Into everything desirable?

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

The fourth topic [of eight]: how he received the nectar of the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] from tremendous spiritual masters. Having sought the source of the lineage from spiritual masters of all the continuous [streams] of ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] of the profound Bön order, which exists in an unbroken lineage from the Supreme Teacher's three [spiritual] bodies, [Shardza] properly received [them]. There are two [ways] to describe briefly how [he accomplished this]: 1) how he relied in a certain way on a principle spiritual master; and 2) how, from that [master], he received just so the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions]. [37]

As for the first [topic of these two]:
 Bowing at the feet of twenty-four
 Who had become supreme masters,
 Learned and accomplished,
 He led a sacred life
 By serving in the proper way
 Through the three kinds of pleasing actions,
 And to him, I pray.

It is said in Sūtra:

The eighty-four thousand outer, inner and secret [teachings];
 The Nine-staged Vehicle and the treasury of the Four Gateways [of Bön];
 And all the secret instructions;

The source [for them all] is the holy lama.

Accordingly, depending exclusively on a spiritual master—the foundation of all good qualities—this holy [Shardza], from the time he was small, rejoiced more and more in his heart in following non-sectarian teachers. Nowadays, in this degenerate age, [there are people who] treat a few lamas of their own order as Buddhas, whether [those lamas] have good qualities or not, and are lax in their respect for [those of] other [sects]. That being the case, [Shardza] did not act like [certain people who] turn their backs on the sacred way of life of holy beings, such as [in the case of individuals who], fearing lest their own greatness might be diminished, will not rejoice in relying on lamas who have less of such things as worldly status and resources than they themselves [do], even though those lamas possess the good qualities of Bön. [38]

Touching the feet of most anyone dwelling as a holy spiritual master in many areas of the central and outlying regions [of Tibet], [Shardza] bowed with veneration and followed [his teachers] in the right way. He received [teachings] from those [masters], having also undergone many hardships for the sake of each and every chapter [of different] sections of doctrine, and immediately he rendered service with humble body, speech and mind to the those teachers. He bowed at the footrest of [their] venerable feet and acted with reverence.

Although the things [he had] were not vast [in quantity], whatever he had [to give] as a [donation] in support of his request [for teachings] that was pure or of good quality [he offered], and he received [teachings] without worrying about not having provisions for himself.

Finally, he contemplated¹⁴² [the teachings] he heard and received, was guided experientially,¹⁴³ performed recitation [of mantra] and made offerings with chanting; in contexts such as these, along with the promise to accomplish [the practices], he relied [on his teachers] in the proper way.

These days seem to be a time in which practicing Bön is thought to be of little importance. Thus, the majority of people put great value on only the slightest bit of worldly wealth, even more than [they put on] a person [who accepts] great responsibility for the Buddha's teaching (*bon*). Without wanting [to undergo] hardship and [give offerings] in support of a request [for teaching], [these people] want to something to arise as if it could be spontaneously obtained from an empty field [in which nothing has been planted]. Therefore [such people will say], "I will request teaching (*bon*) from you," and they will estimate [how] kind [they will be merely] to listen. Relative to [the stories] such as these of those living at this time in which evil runs rampant, even the smallest part of the life story of the majestic teacher [Shardza] is a source of wonder; thus, to understand it is crucial. [39]

* * *

As for the second [topic of two, how, from his [masters], he received just so the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions]]:

The multiplicity of gateways to Bön

142 gshar sgom. This seems to refer to simultaneous analysis and meditation while reading a particular scripture.

143 nyams khrid. This type of guidance or instruction seems to refer to that which is based upon the teacher's personal experience with a particular practice or set of practices.

arriving in this Land of Snow,

Lineages of nectar

that are the vast and infinite classes of Tantra,

To the one who wonderfully collects them

in the pure vase of the heart,

And perfectly completes the ripening and liberation,

I pray.

Although we cannot describe in words all the ways in which [Shardza] received this and that Bön [teaching] from such and such a spiritual master, if we consider the most essential [of these], he requested sections of Bön [teachings] while serving the lotus feet of twenty-four completely perfect spiritual masters.

To elaborate further: directly from the Lord of Siddhas of the Ra clan, Tenzin Wangki Gyalpo, or Drenpa Düdul Tsal—the incarnate form of Lachen [Drenpa Namkha], who was endowed with an illusory wisdom body and who together with his son is the perfect spiritual guide—[Shardza] requested and obtained many [teachings and initiations]. These included the empowerments he received that were mentioned previously; the oral transmission of such [texts] as the *Khamgyé Tenla Pabpé Bum* (*The One-Hundred-*

Thousand Verses Delineating the Eight Realms),¹⁴⁴ and the life-force empowerment¹⁴⁵ of [the protector] Apse and the *Khöpo'i Sadak Tetrük*.¹⁴⁶

From the holy abbot Kelzang Nyima Tokki Gyaltsen, who had thoroughly perfected the good qualities of learning and fortitude [in keeping the vows], [Shardza] requested novice ordination; along with this, he received a vast number of reading transmissions for [texts] such as the *Kyego Chöpa'i Do* (*The Sūtra Blocking the Gate of Rebirth*)¹⁴⁷ and the ritual [text] for bringing rain. [40]

In the presence of the Throne-holder Shengyal Tenzin,¹⁴⁸ who was exalted due to the glory of his noble qualities of learning, discipline and goodness, [Shardza] took full ordination; in connection with this [ceremony], he received the initiation and oral transmission of such [Tantric] cycles as the *Tsangma Lubum* (*The Hundred-thousand Pure Serpent Deities*)¹⁴⁹ and the wrathful [deity] Lhagö Thokpa.¹⁵⁰

From the great monk endowed with the threefold qualification,¹⁵¹ Samten Yeshe, whose mind was well-trained in the enlightened motivation benefiting others, [Shardza]

144 khams brgyad gtan la phab pa'i 'bum. This text, in 16 volumes, corresponds to the Buddhist *prajñāpāramitā* (pha rol du phyin pa) literature.

145 srog dbang. Following this empowerment, the recipient establishes a personal link with the protector in question, committing to the daily recitation of the deity's mantra for special protection.

146 khod po'i sa bdag gtad sprugs kyi skor. This is a ritual text used to clear away obstacles created by earth-owning spirits (sa dag), and I'm told was rediscovered by the treasure-revealer Khod po blo gros thogs med.

147 skye sgo gcod pa'i mdo. One chapter of the Bön Kanjur.

148 gshen rgyal bstan 'dzin.

149 gtsang ma klu 'bum. A text of the Bön Kanjur consisting of five volumes, chanted to remove obstacles associated with the serpent deities (naga) and for good fortune, etc.

150 khro bo lha rgod thog pa.

151 sum ldan. Literally meaning 'one who has three', this can refer either to one endowed with the three sets of vows (individual liberation, bodhisattva and Tantric vows), which is most likely in this context, or it can sometimes refer to a lama who possesses initiation (dbang), oral transmission (lung) and personal instructions (man ngag).

took the Bodhisattva vows; along with these, he received such [teachings] as the direct esoteric instructions on the essence of meditation connected with the experiential guidance for the [textual] cycle of *Dzokchen Yangtsé Longchen (The Great Space, Highest Peak of the Great Perfection)*¹⁵² and the [textual] cycle of *Ösel Dun (The Seven Radiant Lights)*.¹⁵³

Before the Treasure-revealer and sacred crown ornament of millions of types of Siddhas, the wisdom-holder Tsewang Drakpa, alias Dechen Lingpa, he received an immense [variety of teachings], including the initiations and instructions mentioned previously, as well as the *Dodé Kalpa Zangpo (The Sūtra of the Good Age)*.¹⁵⁴

In the presence of the fifth Kundrol, Dūdul Lingpa,¹⁵⁵ the unrivalled supreme guide of the difficult-to-train in the degenerate age, [who is in fact] the immortal teacher Gyerpung Chenpo¹⁵⁶ himself and arrived here with the name of Kundrol, [Shardza] requested such direct oral guidance as the *Martri Gongpa Yongdū (The Naked Instructions, The Complete Collection of the [Buddhas'] Intention)*,¹⁵⁷ and the *Triyik*

152 rdzogs chen yang rtse klong chen. This Great Perfection text is attributed to the early figure Li shu rtag ring, who lived before Drenpa Namkha, and according to traditional histories died in 751.

153 'od gsal bdun. This represents a particular section of the zhang zhung snyan rgyud providing instruction for the sevenweek period of dark retreat (mun mtsham).

154 mdo sde bskal pa bzang po. A section of bka', which Menri Trizin Tenpé Nyima says looks like a Buddhist text and describes the features of this world system. According to him, the contents are more oriented toward cosmology in general rather than the temporal eras per se.

155 kun grol lnga pa bdud 'dul gling pa.

156 gyerpung(s) chen po.

157 dmar khrid dgongs pa yongs 'dus. Nyima Dakpa indicated that this is zhi khro text with bon gsar ma elements.

Marmo Dzuptsuk (The Practice Manual Pointing a Finger Directly at the Red [Heart]).¹⁵⁸ [41]

Before the feet of the holy Victorious One's son, Tsewang Gyurmé,¹⁵⁹ who was a miraculous manifestation of the savior of living beings, Tsewang Rinzin, [Shardza] received experiential guidance concerning the cycle of Atri.

In front of the wisdom-holder endowed with the three [vows], Metön Nyima Gyaltzen,¹⁶⁰ the great ascetic beyond compare in the world [and] a spiritual teacher who had completely mastered the teaching, [Shardza] performed confession and restoration of his vows, accepted instruction in Chulen ("Extracting the Essence")¹⁶¹ and received [teachings] including guidance on Phowa ("Transference of Consciousness").¹⁶²

At the feet of the revered master of compassion, Patön Nyima Bumsel,¹⁶³ [Shardza] obtained the initiation and oral transmission of *Drenpa Tsedrup (The Long-life Practice of Drenpa Namkha)*¹⁶⁴ and guidance on the view of The Great Seal (Skt. *mahāmudrā*); The Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*); and The Middle Way (*dbu ma*; Skt. *mādhyamika*).

158 khrid yig dmar mo mdzub tshugs. I have not had a chance to look at this important text, which I suspect contains a comprehensive approach to Great Perfection practice, including preliminaries, main practice and so on. It was something often requested by Shardza's students in his earlier days of teaching, and something he frequently transmitted at that stage of his career.

159 tshe dbang 'gyur med.

160 me ston nyi ma rgyal mtshan.

161 bcud len; S: *rasayana*; internal alchemy undertaken during retreat during which the practitioner slowly decreases intake of food, subsisting solely on specially prepared medicinal pills.

162 'pho ba. Transference of consciousness referring to practices allowing potential control during and realization resulting from the dying process, through conscious negotiation of the post-mortem intermediate state (bar do).

163 spa ston nyi ma 'bum gsal.

164 dran pa tshe sgrub. An old rediscovered longlife prayer, believed to go back to Zhang Zhung and having an association with a holy mountain in the Gtsang area.

In the presence of Taktsé Tulku Rinpoche, [alias] Yungdrung Wanggyal,¹⁶⁵ who possessed the brilliance of transmission and realization, [Shardza] received the oral transmission for a textual cycle on daily religious conduct, the confession and restoration of Bodhisattva vows, and personal guidance (*zhal khrid*) on the introduction to the natural state.

Before Nyikhog Togden ("The Realized One from Nyikhog"), Tsultrim Namdak,¹⁶⁶ a miraculous manifestation of Mecé Tsukpu,¹⁶⁷ [Shardza] received the sequence of ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] connected with the *Dripchang Munsel Drönmé* (*The Burning Lamp Purifying the Obscurations, Clearing Away the Darkness*),¹⁶⁸ and limitless oral transmissions concerned with the *Minub Tsendo* (*The Sūtra of Undiminshing Names*)¹⁶⁹ as well as Tantric practice texts (*sgrub sde*).

From the master of meditative experience and realization, Pelzhol Lama ("the Lama from Pelzhol"), [alias] Sönam Gyaltzen,¹⁷⁰ [Shardza] received many oral transmissions, which included the initiation for the *Choga Chunyi* (*The Twelve Rituals*),¹⁷¹ the *Namgyal*

165 stag rtse sprul sku rin po che g.yung drung dbang rgyal.

166 snyi khog rtogs ldan tshul khriims rnam dag.

167 me lce gtsug phud.

168 sgrib sbyangs mun sel sgron me. Often called sgrib sbyangs for short, this is a very short text used in funerary rites, composed by bsod nams blo gros.

169 me nub mtshan mdo. This canonical text (bka') has been published in six volumes and is said to include seventeen-thousand different names of the Buddha.

170 'phel zhol bla ma bsod nams rgyal mtshan.

171 cho ga bcu gnyis. This canonical text includes a number of interesting didactic accounts, I am told, concerning how and why Tonpa Shenrab performed rituals and emanated 12 divine forms to subdue the negative emotions of certain kings and other figures. It appears to include both ritual instructions and mythic precedents.

*Zungchen (The Great Mantra of Nampar Gyalwa),*¹⁷² and the *Rikdruk Tardo (The Sūtra Liberating the Six Classes [of Beings]).*¹⁷³

In front of Zertrö Togden ("the Realized One from Zertrö"), [alias] Tsultrim Pelzang,¹⁷⁴ [who mastered] the yoga of ultimate truth, [Shardza] received initiation and oral transmission for the *Vairo Gongkhug*¹⁷⁵ [and] the *Tsewang Gyarima (The Birdlike Mountain of Tsewang [Rinzin]),*¹⁷⁶ as well as the oral transmission for the *Lezhi Gyunnga.*¹⁷⁷ [42]

In the presence of Pelzhol Togden ("the Realized One from Pelzhol"), [alias] Sönam Pelzang,¹⁷⁸ the yogin who realized the ultimate secret, [Shardza] received oral

172 nam rgyal gzungs chen. Also a canonical source, this text tells the story of Tonpa Shenrab's wrathful emanation as Nampar Gyalwa in order to help save a king and his palace from ruin by malicious demons.

173 rigs drug thar mdo. A canonical sūtra for liberating the six classes of beings from their respective realms.

174 zer 'phro rtogs ldan tshul khrims dpal bzang.

175 bai ro gong khug. Vairocana is an interesting early figure important to the Nyingma school as well as to Bönpos. The Bön tradition believes that he was originally a Bönpo and remained so in his heart, but converted to Buddhism to avoid exile and persecution at the hands of early Buddhist kings. As he is believed to have thus composed both Buddhist and Bönpo texts, his legacy is important to non-sectarian Buddhists and to the eclectic New Bön movement. Nevertheless, I am told that it is not necessarily the case that his Bönpo works would fall under the category of New Bön. The specific contents and orientation of this text are not known in Dolanji.

176 tshe dbang bya ri ma. bya ri ma refers to a mountain near Kailash that is one of eight holy places (gnas) associated with Tsewang Rinzin, and it is here that he composed this particular ritual text. There are a number of other similar long-life ritual texts associated with the different places, including: tshe dbang bod yul ma, tshe dbang rgya gar ma, tshe dbang rgya nag ma, and tshe dbang zhang zhung ma. I'm told the chanting varies among them, though the content is presumably quite similar.

177 las bzhi rgyun lnga. zhi ba g.yung drung yongs rdzogs; khro bo dbang chen; drag po dbal gsas; and rgyas pa kun snang are four Bön Tantric texts that together comprise the las bzhi; these four plus the rgyun me lha'i gzhung refer to the rgyun nga.

178 'phel zhol rtogs ldan bsod nams dpal bzang.

transmission for the stages of meditation (*sādhana*) for the *Walsé Lerim*¹⁷⁹ [and] the *Chötor Tsigo Dunpa (Seven Classes of Torma Offerings)*.¹⁸⁰

Before Tulku Nyima Özer,¹⁸¹ a great being who was wise, kind and able, [Shardza] received ripening [empowerment], liberating [instruction] and direct guidance [in] the *Khandro Sangdzö (The Secret Treasury of the ḍākinī)*¹⁸² and the oral transmission [for] the *Drimé Ziji (Stainless Brilliance)*.¹⁸³

From Togden Gadé¹⁸⁴ of the Tro (*khro*) lineage, who was accomplished though self-mastery in the path of skillful method—[i.e., in the practice of] the channels and winds—[Shardza] received hands-on guidance in the cycle of the *Nyengyü Tsalung Sangtur*.¹⁸⁵

In front of the incomparable master of compassion, the holy, learned and accomplished one, Rabla Rinchen Namgyal,¹⁸⁶ [Shardza] received many things such as the initiation and oral transmission of the *Longgyé (The Vast Space)*, the *Khandro*

179 dbal gsas las rim. This one-volume text includes the complete cycle for the deity dbal gsas, including invocations, *sādhana*, mantras, long-life prayers, and a feast offering.

180 mchod gtor rtsis mgo bdun pa. This is a very short canonical text that describes a sevenfold wateroffering ritual to be performed in the morning. It appears that the terms mchod gtor and chu gtor are synonymous in this context; both refer to the daily practice of offering dough pellets with medicinal substances that have been placed in water.

181 sprul sku nyi ma 'od zer.

182 mkha' 'gro'i gsang mdzod. This text is one of kun grol grags pa's well-known works and focuses on the practice of rtsa rlung ("Channels and Winds").

183 dri med gzi brjid. This refers to the long version (there is also a medium and condensed version) of Tonpa Shenrab's biography.

184 rtogs ldan dga' bde.

185 ngyan rgyud rtsa rlung gsang thur. This may be related to kun grol's mkha' 'gro gsang mdzod, but this remains to be investigated; sources in Dolanji were not certain. In any case, it refers to the yogic subtle-body practices which work with the lower cakras and downward-moving energies, related to the penis and the anus, and involve developing the capacity to physically pull up liquid (as in vajroli mudra) as part of standard preparation for sexual yoga, which may or may not be practiced afterwards, according to the individual, his vows, etc.

186 rab la/bla rin chen rnam rgyal.

Sangchö (*The Secret Cutting Through of the dākinī*), the *Wangchen Gekhō* (*The Mighty Gekhō*), and the *Trowo Wangchen* (*The Mighty Wrathful Ones*).¹⁸⁷

In the presence of Yeshé Tenzin, the precious reincarnate nephew [associated with] Möngyal [monastery],¹⁸⁸ [Shardza] received many [teachings] such as on the *Tsuktor Dukkarmo* (*The White Parasol above the Crown of the Head*)¹⁸⁹ and the *Shenak Rampa* (*The Quick Black Executioner*).¹⁹⁰

Before the fully-ordained monk and wisdom-holder, Tenzin Gyaltzen from Ronggyab,¹⁹¹ [Shardza] obtained such things as the [texts of] Drenpa Yapsé,¹⁹² the Martri Duknga Rangdrol (*The Naked Instructions [for] Self-liberating the Five Poisons*),¹⁹³ and the Nyengyü Kagyü Korzhi (*The Four Cycles of the Orally Transmitted Canonical Lineage*).¹⁹⁴

187 klong rgyas; mkha' 'gro'i gsang gcod; dbal chen ge khod; khro bo dbang chen. The klong rgyas, alias the stong mtshan (*One Thousand Names [of the Buddha]*) or the me tog mchod pa (The Flower Offering) is an important canonical text used ritually to help the recently deceased. Menri Trizin Tenpé Nyima mentioned that it was connected with the mdo gzer mig. the mkha' 'gro'i gsang gcod is a widely-accepted ritual text on the well-known 'cutting' practice, in which one presents an offering one's own body. dbal chen ge khod and the khro bo dbang chen are ritual texts commonly used in Menri; the former concerns ritual service for and practice of the important wrathful deity ge khod, while the has been described to me as a ritual text in which virtually 'every wrathful deity is explained'. An extant commentary on the latter text is available in Dolanji.

188 smon rgyal dbon sprul rin po che ye shes bstan 'dzin.

189 gtsug tor gdugs dkar mo. A female wrathful deity who is adorned with a white parasol and is endowed with innumerable heads, hands and feet.

190 gshed nag ram pa. This deity was unfamiliar to the Menri Trizin, who imagined it described a wrathful deity possibly of significance in New Bön tradition.

191 This could be a proper name, or it could refer to a place 'behind' (rgyab) rgyal rong.

192 This refers to texts composed by the trio of Drenpa Namkha, Tsewang Rinzin and Padma Tongdrol, and suggests at least some materials that might be categorized as New Bön.

193 dmar khrid dug lnga rang grol. Composed by Kun grol grags pa, this texts includes preliminary practice, main practice and so on and I'm told it is presently popular in the Dolpo area of Nepal.

194 snyan rgyud bka' rgyud skor bzhi. this fourfold cycle is an early Bön Dzokchen text composed of the phyi lta ba spyi gcod; nang man ngag dmar khrid; gsang ba rig pa gcer mthong; and yang gsang gnas lugs phugs gcod.

In front of the learned Yizhin Wanggyal,¹⁹⁵ the nephew who held the Tro (*khro*) lineage, [Shardza] obtained the initiation and oral transmission for [the Tantric deity] Meri (*Fire Mountain*) and for the practice cycle of Chamma (*The Loving Goddess*),¹⁹⁶ along with the the initiation and supporting [instructions] for the cycle of Drenpa Drakpo (*The Wrathful Drenpa [Namkha]*).¹⁹⁷ [43]

Before the feet of the great treasure-[revealer], master of Siddhas and lord of the dance, Sangngak Lingpa, [Shardza] received a truly vast amount, including initiation and oral transmission for the Takla Tashi Terdzong cycle,¹⁹⁸ the Kundrol Lama Tsasü cycle,¹⁹⁹ and the majority of his own treasure.

Directly from the great wisdom-holder Chimé Tsukpu,²⁰⁰ the son of the Treasure-revealer [from] Möngyal [monastery], [Shardza] received the Dzogchen Yangtsé Longchen²⁰¹ and the collected works of profound treasure of the fifth Kundrol.

Directly from the wisdom-holder endowed with the three [vows], Tenzin Nyima Zangpo,²⁰² a son of the Treasure-revealer, [Shardza] received the initiation of Namgyal and Guru Drakmar.²⁰³

195 yid bzhin dbang rgyal.

196 me ri; byams ma. zhang zhung me ri is a powerful Tantric yidam while byams ma is a benevolent and accessible goddess similar in form and attribute to the Buddhist sgrol ma (Tara).

197 dran pa drag po.

198 stag la bkra shis gter rdzong skor. A treasure text discovered by blo ldan snying po, it is a ritual for the wrathful deity stag la me 'bar.

199 kun grol bla ma rtsa gsus skor.

200 'chi med gtsug phud.

201 rdzogs chen yang rtse klong chen. This treasure texts represents a traditional, important older source for Bön Dzokchen material.

202 bstan 'dzin nyi ma bzang po.

In the presence of Dawa Drakpa,²⁰⁴ the holy son of the Ra [clan] who [attained] the great rainbow body, [Shardza] received the Bönnyi Dalbum (*The Hundred-Thousand That Cover the Nature of Things*),²⁰⁵ the Taklha Putri Marnak cycle (*The Red and Black 'Sharp Hair' of Taklha [Mebar]*)²⁰⁶ and the cycle for bringing rain.

If [all of] these are additionally condensed into subcategories, [one can say that] from twenty-four very kind teachers he received in a general way the majority of the Word (*bka'*) of the Victorious One such as the Dulwa Gyüdrük (*The Six Treatises on Monastic Discipline*)²⁰⁷ as well as present-day traditions of exegesis (*bka' rten*) such as the commentary on the Chötor Tsigö Dünpa (*Seven Classes of Torma Offerings*).²⁰⁸ Concerning the rituals of the Scriptures (*mdo*) [belonging to] the exoteric Tantras, he received the triad of Nam, Long, and Gyal.²⁰⁹ Concerning those of the Secret Mantra [belonging to] the esoteric Tantras, he received the triad of Zhi, Wang, and Khro²¹⁰ and the stages of ripening [empowerments], liberating [instructions] and supporting

203 nram rgyal and gu ru drag dmar. nram par rgyal ba is an important wrathful manifestation of ston pa gshen rab long present in Bön tradition, whereas gu ru drag dmar appears to be a wrathful red manifestation of Padmasambhava, which would represent a New Bön practice.

204 zla ba grags pa.

205 bon nyid bdal 'bum. This is canonical material, mostly sūtra (*mdo*), in 80 volumes.

206 stag lha spu gri dmar nag skor. The red and black forms of the wrathful stag lha me 'bar represent two of three 'roots' in his ritual cycle. This text is often recited in Menri.

207 'dul ba rgyud drug. This important text is the first or second volume of the Bön canon, and is divided into six chapters dealing with the different systems of Monastic Discipline (*vinaya*).

208 mchod gtor rtsis mgo bdun pa. See note above.

209 nram klong rgyal gsum. This reference is somewhat unclear. It may refer to the ritual texts nram rgyal; klong rgyas; and rgyal ba 'dus pa. From NBT437.5, it may be klong rgyas, nram dag and nram rgyal, though I did not discover anything about nram dag.

210 zhi dbang khro gsum. This grouping was not used in Menri, making clear identification of these three difficult.

[guidance] for the Sekhar Choknga (*The Five Supreme Divine Palaces*),²¹¹ and so on.

[44] Concerning the secret Tantras of the wisdom-holding Celestial Goddesses, he received [different] varieties of initiation, guidance and oral transmission that have continued to exist such as the three [long-life practices of] Gya, Bö, and Dren²¹² and [cycles associated with] Lishu, Tonggyung and Jé Kundrol.²¹³ Concerning the ultra-secret tradition of the Great Perfection, he received, along with the ripening [empowerments], liberating [instructions], experiential guidance and esoteric precepts such as those associated with the three [lineages of] A[tri], Dzok[chen], and Nyen[gyü], he also received most types of ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] for the cycles of New Treasure (*gter gsar*) beginning with the four later incarnations²¹⁴ and proceeding up to and including the Lord of the Dance, Sangngak Lingpa. The myriad ways in which that [took place] have not been committed to writing, and roughly speaking, one may know [about how this occurred] from the comprehensive version of [Shardza's] biography and from his notebook that exists separately.

211 gsas mkhar mchog lnga. This fivefold classification refers to five main tantric meditational deities (yi dam): dbal sras, la rgod, khro bo [rgyal po], ge khod and phur ba, who are said to correspond to body, speech, mind, qualities (yon tan) and activities ('phrin las), respectively.

212 rgya bod dran gsum. Dungri Shedrup Gyeltsen commented that this triad likely refers to three common varieties of long-life practices: tshe dbang rgya gar ma; tshe dbang bod yul ma; and dran pa tshe sgrub. Tshe dbang rig 'dzin is the principle deity in the first two, whereas the third text centers on Dran pa nam mkha'.

213 li shu stong rgyung rje kun sgrol. This reference appears to refer to materials associated with: li shu stag ring, stong rgyung mthu chen (sp?), and kun sgrol grags pa.

214 sprul sku nmam bzhi. This quartet of reincarnate lamas associated with new Bön treasure are, according to Shardza's historical work: Loden Nyingpo (*blo ldan snying po*, 1360-1385), Mishik Dorjé, alias Shelzhig Yungdrung Gyalpo (*mi shig rdo rje, shel zhig g.yung drung rgyal po*, b. 1650), Sanggyé Lingpa (*sangs gyas gling pa*, b. 1705), and Kundrol Drakpa Jatsön Nyingpo (*kun drol grags pa 'ja' mtshon snying po*, b. 1700).

From among these spiritual teachers, Razhik Drupchen acted as a singular teacher, an incomparably kind Tantric lineage master; he and the great Treasure-revealer Tsewang Drakpa, the Treasure-revealer's [spiritual] son Tsewang Gyurmé, Kundrol Düdul Lingpa, and the holder of the three [vows] Samten Yeshé—known as the five aspects of the Teacher who is the supreme guide—served as preceptors of the blessed experiential lineage. [These five] plus Shengyal Tenzin along with Rinchen Namgyal added—known as the seven aspects of the Teacher who reveals the truth, seemed perpetually to act as objects of praise. These masters have not been arranged hierarchically in terms of their good qualities, but rather from the perspective of how [Shardza] obtained their grace. [45]

Similarly, even though all rivers collect in the great sea, [the sea] is never satiated; just so, from long ago this majestic lama [Shardza], though a great being who was a vast ocean of Bön, even still acted in such a way as to perpetually and insatiably gather myriad rivers of all the various classes of Bön. [Acting in this way,] he lived as a supreme holder of the doctrine who lovingly sustained the teachings, and of all the ornaments of good qualities belonging to this great being, this was the single foremost.

You are the only one to earnestly accept
 the way of relying properly
 upon the spiritual teacher, the source of all noble qualities
 by means of the three [kinds of] pleasing [actions];
 Thus, the great treasure
 of millions of immeasurable noble qualities
 gushed forth.

As soon as the lineage of ripening and liberating nectar,
 the profound and vast classes of Bön,
 was gathered in the throat of the three types of faith,
 The great skill of supreme knowledge,
 which awakened the ocean of the vehicle of the three lineages,
 was perfected.
 Who else but you could do that?

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

The fifth [topic of eight]: how he made his mark in meditation practice in solitary places. [46] As it says in the Sūtra, the *Drimé [Ziji] (Stainless Brilliance)*:²¹⁵ "Having reached the full measure of insight liberating the mindstream, and having abandoned the assortment of worldly diversions and distractions, in order to accomplish unsurpassed awakening alone, he renounced the diversity of distractions and relied on solitude alone." Just so, not only did [Shardza] pursue whatever ripening and liberating instructions he [could] receive, he [also] took them to heart through experiential practice in solitude. There are two [ways] to describe briefly how [he accomplished this]: 1) how he held the demeanor of a hermit; and 2) how he experientially trained in Sūtra, Tantra and the Great Perfection.

As for the first, it is said:

On the summit of Yungdrung Lhunpo,

215 mdo dri med [gzi brjid]. The long version of Tonpa Shenrap's biography.

the supreme place of solitude,
 in accord with the six-branched concentration,
 and with the character and conduct
 of one of austere means,
 He planted the victory banner of practice,
 and to him, I pray.

Returning in general to this precious teaching of the Early Translation, [Shardza] was a practitioner of both exegesis and meditation practice. Nevertheless, he appears primarily in the special transmission (*bka' babs*) of the Practice Lineage. Thus, in accord with the life of the precious, holy protector of living beings, the Lord [Tönpa Shenrap], he planted the victory banner of practice in solitary places and dwelt in the manner of a renunciant for his whole life.

Moreover, this magnificent lama, because he had sharp faculties and the potential for Direct Crossing (*thod rgal*), he dwelt in self-arising yoga; thus he did not need to worry about striving on the gradual path. [47] Even so, unlike [those who follow] the fashionable custom of finding satisfaction in merely requesting and obtaining whatever teaching (*bon*) one can receive in order to promote the [mere] facade of the Practice Lineage's teaching, [Shardza practiced] with the positive aspiration to properly accomplish the meaning of those [teachings], abundantly performing one after another the nine hundred thousand of the accumulations and purifications of all the Preliminary Practices, the recitation of [a set] number [of mantras] each month, and the stages of the Tantric practice cycles (Skt. *sādhana*).

In particular, at the age of thirty-four, [Shardza] thought to travel to solitary retreat places based on a genuine experience of disillusionment and renunciation with regard to this [worldly] life. At that time, at the sacred place Shardza Wernying Migyur²¹⁶ on the side of Yungdrung Lhunpo [mountain], virtuous signs that delighted the presiding deities (*gnas bdag*) appeared, and this was a very auspicious omen (*rten 'brel*) that his practice would develop. [Shardza] arrived while [this was occurring] and he dwelt there, devoting himself earnestly to the sacred way of life that is free from [worldly] activity.

In addition, [Shardza] had a dwelling place in the area which was a small house for meditation just able to contain his body, and he thoroughly cast off all the outer diversions of the world and inner elaborations of conceptual thought. Without looking anywhere for pleasures such as good friends, food and wealth, he relied upon nourishment and clothing only to sustain his life. In a relaxed, effortless state that was totally consistent with the Fivefold Isolation or the Six-limbed Concentration, while sustaining the joyful experience of a spacious mind, he trained his mind in the gradual path and strove one-pointedly in the practice of the definitive, essential secret (*nges gsang snying po'i nyams len*). [48] Undertaking the training of the supreme Practice Lineage and dwelling with the comportment [of someone] free from [worldly] activity, he persisted [in this way] to the end of his life.

As for the second [topic of two, how he experientially trained in Sūtra, Tantra and the Great Perfection]:

216 shar rdza wer snying mi 'gyur.

He perfected the mind of renunciation and *bodhicitta*
 And persevered in the meditation (*ting 'dzing*) of the two stages.
 Through the unsurpassed path he manifested the natural state.
 To the one who found the nectar of realization,
 I pray.

[Let us] subdivide this [topic] into [three] groups [and examine each in turn, beginning with the first, the path of Sūtra:]

In a Sūtra it says: "Encompass everything with the view of the Great Vehicle [in] the Secret [Great Perfection] Tantras; search out the essence of meditation through the Inner Tantras; adopt and abandon [virtue and vice] through the conduct of the monastic discipline in the Outer Tantras. The unity of these three will accomplish the twofold welfare of self and others." [Shardza] entered the path that is intended by this passage; [therefore], let us [first] examine gradually and from the beginning the stages of the path of Sūtra that he practiced.

The majority of today's Bönpos, having learned a few books for [performing] rituals [aimed at acquiring] food, aspire to become only drum-wielding town-wanderers, and some hope that Bön consists only of the enjoyable experiences of this life. [These people] concern themselves with pleasant accommodations, abundant food and drink and congenial attendants, and they perform only the Bön that [is related to] the circumstances of this life. Because there are many who grasp merely at majestic attire, the sensual experience of drums and music, and feast offerings (*tshog 'khor*) of meat and beer [as if it were] essential, the activities of the Bönpo are being seen as [reflecting merely] a

predilection for procuring food. This is the evil period in which we will see Bön becoming the mere chanting of liturgy. [49]

Nevertheless, the residuum of the majestic [Shardza's] former training came forcefully into being [in this degenerate age]. Thus, in accord with the genuine practices of the former holy ones of the Dru, Zhu, Pa and Me'u [clans]—the owners of the Practice Lineage teachings, uncontaminated by any local customs whatsoever—[Shardza] principally acted only as a practitioner as opposed to a commentator. Moreover, he did not follow after certain people who, counting themselves to be Tantric practitioners, speak senseless views that contradict [the karmic law] of cause and effect, thereby deluding themselves.

Sequentially ordering the Preliminary Practice instructions for the cycles of the unsurpassed Tantra and Dzogchen connected with the stages of the Bodhisattva path that are consistent with the scriptural tradition of the peerless holy father and sons,²¹⁷ [Shardza] directly engaged the practice of analysis and meditation by persevering through adversity. Through the combination of genuine confidence regarding the meditational stages and repeated meditation [practice], he exerted himself for a long time in the stages of gathering [the accumulations of merit and wisdom] and purifying [defilements].

Striving in the depths of the practice for [developing] the twofold precious mind of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*), he focused his energy exclusively on mental purification. Thus, the arrogant conceptions of grasping at 'I' and 'mine' were eradicated and as a result

217 mtshungs med dam pa yab sras. This expression refers to the A khrid lineage of dgong mdzod ri khrod chen po, 1038-1096.

his attachment [based on] the perspective of 'me' and 'you' was completely exhausted. [50] He aligned himself in the center of the practice of the unity of emptiness and compassion, and thus the depths of his mind were cultivated in the essential qualities of superior beings. A clearly remarkable demeanor, [capable of] bringing negative circumstances to the path, welled up as his natural disposition. Because he possessed the marvelous enlightened motivation (*bodhicitta*) that was beneficial for all with whom he was connected, he was named a Victor's son [and] and a great Bodhisattva. One should know that even just this sketch [I have written], which functions to prepare the mind for [cultivating] the mind of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*)—the essence of Bön down to the present day—has arisen only from the kindness of the magnificent lama [Shardza].

Regarding the perspective of the second [of the three subdivisions concerning his training in Sūtra, Tantra, and the Great Perfection], the Creation and Perfection Stages of the path [associated with] Tantra and the Mind Discernment [of the Great Perfection]: in general, [Shardza's] initiated mind having been ripened, he undertook and became accomplished in the experiential practice of the liberating instructions. In particular, he relied upon the repetitive method (*'khor lo*; "the wheel") of the Creation Stage deity [yoga] within the context of four [daily] practice sessions. By means of the contemplation (*ting 'dzin*; Skt. *samādhi*) and meditation on [both] the Single and the Elaborate Seal,²¹⁸ he purified his bodily obscurations.

218 *phyag rgya gcig spros*. Erik Hein Schmidt's dictionary explains that the single seal (mudra) refers to contemplation on an individual deity, while the elaborate seal is a more complex visualisation of a single deity, which would likely incorporate a larger retinue or *maṇḍala*.

By assimilating the experience of the vase empowerment—the quick path in which the three seats [where the visualized deity resides]²¹⁹ are divinely purified, [Shardza] achieved a stability in which all appearances—primordially pure, pervasive illusion—were firmly bound by the Seal (Skt. *mudra*) of the deity. [Nevertheless] it is not as if he did not have recourse to the threefold ritual service²²⁰ of the majority of the many excellent deities of the inner and outer classes of Tantra, and in particular the three main protectors of Bön associated with the inner Tantric cycle(s).

[Shardza] many times conducted the ritual service and practice (*bsnyen sgrub*) of such [deities as those found in] the cycles of Kunzang Zhiwa (*The Peaceful All-Good One*), Lama Drenpa [Namkha] and Tsewang [Rinzin], as well as Walphur Nagpo (*The Black Dagger-Point [Deity]*).²²¹ [51] He did even more than four times the requisite number of [mantra] recitation [appropriate] for those [deities], and more than one hundred million Salé-ö [mantras]. He additionally performed a tremendous number of ritual services for [deities] including Drenpa Yabse, Walse, Gekhö, Taklha and Chidul.²²² Even the types of things he recited, including [the liturgy of] Chamma, confession, and the Samlhun [text],²²³ numbered in the tens of thousands. Relying on the repetitive

219 gdan gsum. Geshé Nyima Kunkhyab believes that this refers to the lotus, sun and moon upon which the visualized deity sits, and which are the first objects to be manifested as an 'appearance-aspect' (snang cha) of the mind realizing emptiness.

220 The text describes three aspects of this ritual service (*bsnyen pa gsum*): *dus*, *grangs* and *mtshan ma*. The first refers to the proper time of day and/or the number of sessions per day service should be performed; the second the number of mantras or offerings to be done, and the third the particular symbols or ritual expressions to be utilized in each context. [Personal communication from Geshe Nyima Kunkhyab].

221 kun bzang zhi ba; bla ma dran pa; tshe dbang; dbal phur nag po.

222 dran pa yab sras; dbal gsas; ge khod; stag lha; spyi 'dul.

223 *bsam lhun*. This is a text for the dispelling of obstacles, the longer of two such liturgies that are found within the *bar chad rnam sel*.

method (*'khor lo*) of mantra—the recitation of, for example, [what] amounted to one hundred thousand of the *Dru'i Zungdrik* (*The Arranged Dharanis of Dru*)—he purified the obscurations of speech.²²⁴

Through his assimilating the secret empowerment in which sound is perfected as mantra, all sound, which arises internally and externally in dependence upon the action of the moving wind(s), was transformed into the everlasting (*g.yung drung*) acoustic experience that is empty of sound. Exerting himself for many years in the practice of the quick path of the Completion Stage methods—the 'channel and wind' (*rtsa lung*) practice of inner heat (Skt. *caṇḍāli*) together with the ancillaries—[also known generally as] the 'method with symbolism' (*mtshan bcas thabs*), he relied upon the repetitive method (*'khor lo*) of the nature of mind's primordial wisdom, [and] he purified the mental obscurations.

Through his assimilating the wisdom empowerment via the unity of wind and mind, he came to totally realize the profound wisdom-mind (*dgongs pa*) associated with the Four Joys of melting bliss. Relying upon the repetitive method (*'khor lo*) of co-emergent primordial wisdom, the radiant light of the featureless dimension, he purified the obstructions to omniscience.

Through [Shardza's] assimilation of the word empowerment in which one meditates on the view of the Great Seal (S: *mahāmudrā*), the primordial wisdom associated with the dimension of the Abiding Reality (*gnas lugs*) was drawn out as dynamic energy, and experientially adopted. Thus, there is no conflict between his accomplished practice and

224 bru'i gzhung bsgrigs.

[that intended in the original] Tantra [of Shenrap]. [52] Relying on the profound instructions for the practice of the essential Tantra and the Mind [Discernment of the Great Perfection] that is totally consistent with the scriptural tradition of the learned ones of Zhangzhung and Tibet, he sustained the legacy of the Practice Lineage's forefathers. Thus he dwelt in the exalted position of an accomplished, supreme wisdom-holder who peacefully enjoyed himself everywhere in the glory of the two types of genuine attainments (Skt. *siddhi*).

[Let us now] examine the third [of three subdivisions], the stages of the path of the Unsurpassed [Great Perfection] Vehicle: by means of the respect and devotion associated with single-pointed trust in his immensely kind root lama, [who is] the essence of all the sources of refuge combined, [Shardza] came to be self-reliant. By means of the path of Cutting Through (*threg chod*)—which is associated with primordial purity—the truth of awareness that transcends the [ordinary discursive] mind was taken as the path through singular investigation and then meditated upon. Thus, meditation arose by way of the view. Relying on the yoga that is [like] the continuity of a river [flowing] day and night, he clearly understood the wisdom-mind of Kuntu Zangpo and pursued the frontiers of what is primordially established.

[Shardza] practiced just as they are the key points of the forty-two topics [in] the Tantric [texts on the] stages of the path of Direct Crossing (*thod rgal*)—the path producing the direct perception of the self-luminosity of the spontaneously-present radiant light. He was a great yogi of the ultimate truth for whom, in this life, the path to mastery over the Grounds (Skt. *bhūmi*) of the Victorious One in which there are Four [Buddha] Bodies showed itself in signs and indicators [of his realization]. Having

thoroughly perfected the creative energy associated with the good qualities of experiential realization in accord with the stages of the path, that realized one majestically dwelt in the exalted status of a courageous hero who was just like a snow lion—free from any fear whatsoever. [53]

Giving up concern for the myriad splendors of *samsāra*,
 With the demeanor of a bird moving through the sky,
 In the delightful medicine (*sman*) country, the supreme place of seclusion,
 He was as resplendent as the full moon.

A mind of renunciation aspiring to liberation day and night;
 A courageous mind assuming great responsibility
 For the welfare of others;
 An immaculate view expelling a mountain of philosophical extremes;
 These [qualities] developed in you as if unparalleled.

The Creation [Stage of] supreme method manifested [the deity in] the three
 [perceptual] spheres,
 And the Perfection [Stage of] wisdom [developed] the functionality of wind
 and mind;
 Through them, he gained mastery over the glory of action and
 accomplishment,
 As amazing as vying for water in a rainy-season stream.

Through the view of Breakthrough, taking primordial purity as the path,
 And the meditation of Direct Crossing, taking spontaneous presence as the
 path, [54]
 He confidently exhibits naked empty awareness;
 By the brilliant splendor of that

Is he not ruler over the supreme royal seat
Of the four [Buddha] Bodies?

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

The sixth [topic of eight]: how, depending on that [practice], [Shardza] acted for the welfare of the teachings and living beings. Although [Shardza's] foundation was made stable through his adopting the practice as [we have seen], in *Drimé [Ziji] (The Stainless [Brilliance])*,²²⁵ it states: "Through the unity of skillful method and compassion, one thinks of the welfare of living beings and is endowed with a mind that is wise and loving. Such a person is said to be a great [upholder of] the teaching." Just so, complete regard for the welfare of the teachings and sentient beings is the essential point of what is to be done in the work of superior, holy beings. There are two ways to briefly discuss how [Shardza acted in such a way]: 1) how he sustained the long-standing tradition of scriptural exegesis (*bshad*) and practice (*sgrub*); and 2) how he widely perpetuated the continuity of the [methods] that ripen and liberate.

As for the first [of these two topics]:

To create a foundation for the Victorious One's teaching
in this degenerate age,
his altruistic mind of generosity—[the dawn] brought forth through the
morning star
his activities of exegesis and practice—the brilliance of the sun

225 dri med [gzi brjid], the long version of ston pa gshen rab's biography.

by these
 the Victorious One's teaching—the lotus garden
 blossomed
 and to him, I pray. [55]

The source of all that is beneficial and pleasing is the teaching of the Victorious One, and the method by which that [teaching] remains for a long time and is disseminated depends upon both explanation and practice. Because the precious teaching of the Victorious One abides wherever there is that activity of explanation and practice, [Shardza], reflecting upon how that is so, had the sole aspiration to be singularly of benefit for the teachings from the time he was young right up until his passing away. Thus, he initially put his energy into [spiritual] dialogue (*'chad nyan*) in all kinds of gatherings of the faithful everywhere, after which he then admitted disciples.

With the *Lamrim Sumgyapa* (*The Three Hundred Stages of the Path*)²²⁶ [in] the tradition of Drenpa Yabsé, [Shardza] gave [teaching on] the *Bönkhor Tsikzhi'i Tika* (*The Wheel of the Doctrine: A Commentary in Four-lined Verses*),²²⁷ which takes [the above] as its foundation, and he made [those two together with] the *Dulwa Kundü* (*The Compendium of Monastic Disciple*), the [*Dulwa*] *Dordü* (*The Abridged [Monastic Discipline]*),²²⁸ and the *Üma Dennyi* (*The Two Truths of the Middle Way*)²²⁹ the basis for participatory lectures [he gave] on [these] five sections of the Word and the Treatises.

226 lam rim sum brgya pa.

227 bon 'khor tshigs bzhi'i .tii ka.

228 'dul ba kun btus dang mdor btus.

229 dbu ma bden gnyis.

Concerning the scriptures of the great Nyammé [Sherap Gyaltsen]: he taught Middle Way, Perfection of Wisdom, Monastic Discipline, and Cosmology together with Valid Cognition augmented by [Nyammé's commentarial text known as] the Truldrön Nampa Nga (*The Magical Lamp in Five Parts*).²³⁰ In the area of Tantra, he gave teachings concerning, and propagated as appropriate, the *Tsagyü Rinchen Kundü* (*The Compendium of Precious Root Tantras*),²³¹ the *Sangdön Namché* (*Discrimination of the Secret Meaning*),²³² the *Trowo Wangchen* (*The Mighty Wrathful Ones*),²³³ the *Magyü Sanggyé Gyüsum* (*The Three Tantras belonging to the Enlightened Mother Tantra*),²³⁴ and the *Dzokpa Chenpo Yetri Tasel* (*The Great Perfection's Primordial Sword Dispelling Extremes*).²³⁵

In particular, with respect to his own scriptural tradition, [he taught] the *Lekshé Dzö* (*The Precious Treasury of Good Sayings, the Origin of the Precious Teaching*),²³⁶ the *Denö Dzö* (*The Precious Treasury of the Collected Scriptures, the Authoritative Texts on*

230 'phrul sgron rnam pa lnga. This collection of five commentarial texts consists of: dbu ma gden gnyis gyi 'brel ba 'phrul gyi sgron ma; 'dul ba mdor bsdus kyi 'phrul gyi sgron ma; nang gses gyi mdzod phug 'brel ba 'phrul gyi sgron ma; tshad ma rnam gyi 'brel ba 'phrul gyi sgron ma; and gsang don rnam 'byed 'brel ba 'phrul gyi sgron ma. One may note that this five part commentary includes material on all of the subjects mentioned here, with the exception of Perfection of Wisdom; in the *Magical Lamp*, the fifth section instead consists of a commentary on a Tantric text (the gsang don rnam 'byed) mentioned in the next sentence. [Thanks to Geshé Kelsang Norbu for bringing this to my attention.]

231 rtsa rgyud rin chen kun 'tus.

232 gsang don rnam 'byed. I am uncertain as to the author and history of this text, but I am told it does precede mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan (late fourteenth-early fifteen century), who authored a commentary on it.

233 khro bo dbang chen. see note above.

234 ma rgyud sangs rgyas rgyud gsum. The threefold arrangement of this text follows a traditional division from the perspectives of 'ground, path and result (gzhi, lam, 'bras bu).'

235 rdzogs pa chen po ye khri mtha' sel. Geshé Kalsang Norbu reported that this text was "a mixture of Tantra and Dzokchen." Given that this text is listed under the topic of Tantra, it is reasonable to assume that the Dzokchen being referred to here is not that of the 'unsurpassed peak vehicle', but rather to the set of teachings and practices also called Dzokchen in Bön classification but which belongs to the 'secret mantra' or Tantra vehicle, and seems to develop out of Perfection Phase (*rdzogs rim*) view and meditation.

236 bstan pa rin po che'i 'byung khungs legs bshad rin po che'i mdzod.

the Stages of the Path of Sūtra, Tantra and the Unsurpassed [Great Perfection]);²³⁷ [56] the *Lungrik Dzö (The Precious Treasury of Scripture and Reasoning, a Clear Depiction of the Topics in the Tenet Systems of All Vehicles)*;²³⁸ and the *Yingrik Dzö (The Precious Treasury of Reality's Expanse and Awareness, Greatly Clarifying the Base, Path and Fruit in the Unsurpassed Vehicle)*.²³⁹ Having sustained the continuity of scriptural interpretation in his four Great Treasuries, he nurtured many students who were firmly established in philosophical tenet systems, thus providing the best conditions for establishing a foundation for the doctrine.

With regard to [the way Shardza] went about accomplishing the aim of exposition: Disseminating the *Changchup Lamrim Chenmo (The Great Stages of the Path to Awakening)*²⁴⁰ and the *Kalung Gyatso (The Ocean of Spoken Precepts, the Preliminary Practice for the Great Atri [system] of Dru)*,²⁴¹ together with supporting [instruction], he perpetuated the continuity of the purificatory training that should precede (*sngon 'gro*) [anything else]. Having disseminated the scriptural instructions and the supporting [guidance], he taught the Main Practice (*dnegos gzhi*) and the Transference [of Consciousness] (*'pho ba*) without leaving anything out. He bestowed the Direct Instructions (*smar khrid*) according to the ritual practice of Dru [as found in] the *Nyengyü Kagyü Korzhi (The Four Cycles of the Orally Transmitted Canonical Lineage)*,²⁴² and

237 mdo sngags bla med dang bcas pa'i lam gyi rim pa'i gzhung sde snod rin po che'i mdzod.

238 theg pa thams cad kyi grub mtha'i gnas gsal par ston pa lung rigs rin po che'i mdzod.

239 bla med theg pa'i gzhi lam 'bras gsum rgya cher gsal ba dbyings rig rin po che'i mdzod.

240 byang chub lam rim chen mo.

241 bru'i a khrid chen mo la sngon 'gro bka' lung rgya mtsho.

242 snyan brgyud bka' rgyud skor bzhi.

according to the treasure tradition of the [*Dzokchen*] *Yangtsé Longchen* (*The Great Space, Highest Peak of the Great Perfection*).²⁴³

Moreover, he made principle the great cycles of instructions (*khrid*) including: the *Dzokchen Namkha Chichö* (*The Great Perfection Cutting All of Space*);²⁴⁴ the instructions on Tsewang Böyulma;²⁴⁵ the *Marmo Dzuptsug* (*Kundrol [Drakpa's] The Finger Pointing [Directly] at the Red [Heart]*);²⁴⁶ the *Gongpa Yongdü* (*The Complete Collection of the [Buddhas'] Intention*);²⁴⁷ and [instructions on] the three [systems of] the Great Seal (Skt. *mahāmudrā*), the Great Perfection, and the Middle Way (Skt. *mādhyamika*); as well as the *Khandro Sangchö* (*The Secret Goddess Severance Practice*);²⁴⁸ instructions in the *Magyü Thugjé Nyima* (*The Mother Tantra: The Compassionate Sun*);²⁴⁹ and so on.

In particular, binding together the Distant Lineage of the Great Atri, the quintessence of all the cycles of the secret [Great Perfection] Mind Discernment, and the Near [i.e., Experiential] Lineage of the *Sangdak Tsasum* (*The Secret Lord, the Three Roots*),²⁵⁰ he established an autonomous stream of instruction in which his Bön teaching of the *Dzokchen Kusum Rangshar* (*The Natural Dawning of the Three Bodies of the Great*

243 yang rtse klong chen.

244 rdzogs chen nam mkha' spyi gcod. This text was reported by Nyima Dakpa to be part of the wellknown early Dzokchen work, the bka' rgyud skor bzhi, which was mentioned above. If so, it would correspond with the first of the cycle, given above as phyi lta ba spyi gcod (*Cutting Through All Views*).

245 tshe dbang bod yul ma. This is one of a group of important longlife ritual texts associated with the deity Tshedbang Rig'dzin.

246 kun grol gyi dmar mo mdzub tshugs. see note above.

247 dgong pa yongs 'dus. see note above.

248 mkha' 'gro'i gsang gcod. see note above.

249 ma rgyud thugs rje nyi ma.

250 gsang bdag rtsa gsum. gsang bdag my informants agreed referred to dran pa nam mkha', while the three roots is the standard triad of lama, yi dam and mkha' 'gro. Dungri Shedrup Gyaltsen receive an initiation in this text in Amdo, and he believes it is a practice or *sādhana* text (sgrub skor) for dran pa nam mkha'.

Perfection)²⁵¹—the special transmission that is the unity of the Great Seal and the Great Perfection mingled in one river—was widely disseminated. [57]

He spread tremendously the stream of instruction of the *Kunzang Nyingthik* (*The Heart-Essence of the All-Good*)²⁵²—the precepts for the method of practice (Skt. *sādhana*) of the *Riknga Deshek Düpa* (*The Assembly of the Five Families of the Bliss-gone [Buddhas]*)²⁵³—an example of [what can be found in] the *Yangzab Namkha'i Dzöchen* (*The Ultra-Profound Great Sky Treasury*),²⁵⁴ the essential thought of the three core classes of the unsurpassed Great Perfection vehicle. Thus, illustrated by his immeasurable kindness in which his blessings became [like] a father's patrimony for his disciples, he spread all different kinds of instructions, and he thus made the famous name of 'the Teachings of the Practice Lineage' heavy with significance.

In general these days, those who adhere to the tenets of the White Hat [sect, i.e., Bönpos], find opportunities though Bön to prepare places for themselves in an elevated position.²⁵⁵ Relying upon the support of wealth and power and on fame that is perversely desired, they have pride-inducing thoughts extending to the tips of their hair, enough to make their heads spin. [Shardza], however, was not at all like them. Through the nectar

251 rdzogs chen sku gsum rang shar. This is a widely used text of Shardza's that begins with the Main Practice (dngos gzhi) of meditation and includes a wide variety of methods connected to Dzokchen, such as Wind and Channel (rtsa rlung) practice, Inner Heat (gtum mo), Breakthrough (khregs chod) and Direct Crossing (thod rgal) and more.

252 kun bzang snying thig. A translation of oral teachings by Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak based on this Dzokchen text has been published in English under the title *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya*. It includes special preliminary practices for Dzokchen, as well as Cutting Through (khregs chod) and Direct Crossing (thod rgal) instruction.

253 rigs lagna bde gshegs 'dus pa.

254 yang zab nam mkha'i mdzod chen. One of Shardza's five treasures (mdzod nga), this treasury largely consists of ritual texts on the four initiations, and is 'characterized by its diffuseness' relative to his other major works, according to the English preface included in its publication in India.

255 mtho ba'i rkang stegs. literally, "a high footrest".

of experiential practice, it was as if [Shardza] cared for the body of realization and spread everywhere the youth of the Grounds and Paths, and an event like this could only arise through the enlightened motivation of the kind, magnificent lama.

As for the second [topic of two], how he widely perpetuated the continuity of the [methods] that ripen and liberate. Between the two, the general [five-fold] cultural sciences and the teachings of Bön, the magnificent [Shardza] gave [instruction] as a master of the teachings of the Practice Lineage of the definitive truth. Thus he was certainly not one to promote interpretations concerning the ordinary cultural sciences. [58] He impartially propagated the ripening [empowerments] and the liberating [instructions] along with the lineage of the reading transmissions of the miraculously-spoken truth, the essence of the teaching.

With the wish that the continuity of the teachings would remain even to the end of time, he was accepted by great friends of virtue who upheld the doctrine. He impartially gave teaching (*bon*) to great, average and lesser disciples without ever considering the difficulty and without fatigue. He pointed out [the teaching] to the immortal Treasure-revealer, the tamer of sentient beings, lord of the dance, and [upholder of] the two teachings, Sangngak Lingpa, who, even though he was a teacher of the magnificent [Shardza] himself, was the supreme incarnation of a student who held the prophesied lineage. [This Shardza did] through the initiation of the Sekhar Choknga (The Five

Supreme Divine Palaces),²⁵⁶ the ripening instructions of the Atri [system], and the guidance on the *Kunzang Nyingthik* (*The Heart-Essence of the All-Good*).

[Shardza] disseminated without sectarianism or bias, in accord with the wishes of each individual, everything from expositions connected with Sūtra, Tantra and the Great Perfection up to and including initiation and authorization rites, sequential instructions, and reading transmissions to all kinds of great lamas and lamas of large and small different types of Bönpo and Buddhist monasteries belonging to the lands of China, Tibet and Nepal. [The following represents a list of such individuals to whom he gave teaching]:

The regent for [Shardza's] monastic seat, the holy, precious, and majestic presence, the incomparable great being who was wise, kind and capable, Lodrö Gyatso;²⁵⁷ [Shardza's] sole heart-son, the sacred son of the Ra [clan], yogi of the definitive truth and the unrivaled great [achiever] of the rainbow body, Dawa Drakpa;²⁵⁸ the supreme incarnation of Tashi Khyil [monastery in] the Ngawa region of Amdo,²⁵⁹ the holy great abbot and master of learning and practice, Tsultrim Tenpé Gyaltzen;²⁶⁰ the supreme Jatang incarnation, the all-mighty wisdom-holder, Tsewang Gyurmé, [alias] Changchup Dorjé Tsal;²⁶¹ the incarnation of the Ra[clan], the lord of accomplished ones and great

256 *gsas mkhar mchog lnga*. This term refers to five of the most important Bönpo yi dam deities; see note above.

257 *blo gros rgya mtsho*.

258 *dbra sras zla ba grags pa*.

259 *a mdo rnga ljongs bkra shis 'khyil*. This monastery is better known as *rtogs ldan dgon pa*.

260 *tshul khrims bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*.

261 [*nyag shod*] *bya btang... tshe dbang 'gyur med byang chub rdo rje rtsal*.

celestial denizen, Kelzang Tenpé Nyima;²⁶² the sixth Kundrol [Drakpa incarnation], the great Treasure-revealer and wisdom-holder, Humchen Drodul Lingpa;²⁶³ most of the spiritual teachers who hold the Long Lineage of the Early Translation teaching of the White Hat [sect], up to and including the old man who guards his wealth by grasping [on to it], the stuffed lion [who is none other than] me. Moreover, the holy natural son of the fifth Kundrol [Drakpa], Tenzin Nyima Zangpo;²⁶⁴ the destroyer of delusion who achieved realization in Direct Crossing (*thod rgal*) and the great Bodhisattva, Rabla Lhagön;²⁶⁵ the mighty incarnation of the Tro [clan] who was spiritually experienced and realized, Yungdrung Tongdrol;²⁶⁶ the holy heart-son Sherap Chokden;²⁶⁷ the yogi Tsultrim Wangchuk;²⁶⁸ the Lhak incarnation, Thekchok Trinlé;²⁶⁹ the Chang incarnation, Tenzin Wanggyal;²⁷⁰ the supreme incarnation of Rinpung [monastery], Sherab Namgyal;²⁷¹ the two supreme incarnations from Dachen;²⁷² the Tré incarnation, Tsultrim Gyaltsen;²⁷³ the holy nephew in the Tro [clan], Yishin Wanggyal;²⁷⁴ the supreme incarnation of lower Nyak, Yungdrung Tsultrim Tenzin Wangpo;²⁷⁵ the supreme incarnation of renunciates, Yungdrung Tenpé Nyima;²⁷⁶ the [Bönpo] monk and spiritual teacher, Tsultrim

262 dbra sprul skal bzang bstan pa'i nyi ma.

263 hum chen 'gro 'dul gling pa.

264 bstan 'dzin nyi ma bzang po.

265 rab bla lha mgon.

266 khro sprul g.yung drung mthong grol.

267 shes rab mchog ldan.

268 tshul khrims dbang phyug.

269 lhag sprul theg mchog phrin las.

270 lchang sprul bstan 'dzin dbang rgyal.

271 rin spungs mchog sprul shes rab nam rgyal.

272 mda' chen.

273 tre sprul tshul khrims rgyal mtshan.

274 khro dbon yid bzhin dbang rgyal.

275 nyag shod mchog sprul g.yung drung tshul khrims bstan 'dzin dban po.

276 g.yung drung bstan pa'i nyi ma.

Chokgyal,²⁷⁷ the venerable priest, Tsultrim Wanggyal,²⁷⁸ the Nepalese lama and great renouncer, Tenzin Tsultrim,²⁷⁹ the nephew of the Ra [clan], Namgyal Drakpa,²⁸⁰ the [Bönpo] monk Senggé Nyima,²⁸¹ the free and blissful lama Tsultrim Drimé,²⁸² the preceptor of Chyungnak, Tsultrim Puntsok,²⁸³ the nephew of the Kyang [clan], Tenzin Rinchen,²⁸⁴ the two abbots of Tashi Kyil [monastery],²⁸⁵ the official of the Trochen [kingdom], Tsewang Nordzin,²⁸⁶ [from] Rekang, Lama Tarchin,²⁸⁷ [60] the hermit of Six-Peaked [Mountain], Namdak Dönden,²⁸⁸ the lama of Gyatrika, Tsultrim Yungdrung,²⁸⁹ the holy nephew in the Chyung [clan], father and son,²⁹⁰ and so on.

[Shardza also disseminated such teachings in the same way to] to all kinds of individual gatherings of the faithful. These [assemblies] included great, dignified men of China and Tibet [such as] the Trochen king,²⁹¹ the Drakteng king,²⁹² the Geshé king,²⁹³ and the Lingsang king.²⁹⁴

The magnificent [Shardza] was not one to expound but one time from the scriptures; usually [he taught the same material] a great number of times. He gave [teachings]

277 tshul khrims mchog rgyal.

278 tshul khrims dbang rgyal.

279 bal po'i bla ma bstan 'dzin tshul khrims.

280 dbra dbon rnam rgyal grags pa.

281 seng ge nyi ma.

282 tshul khrims dri med.

283 khyung nag mkhan po tshul khrims phun tshogs.

284 skyang dbon bstan 'dzin rin chen.

285 bkra shis 'khyil kyi mkhan po rnam gnyis.

286 tshe dbang nor 'dzin.

287 re kang bla ma mthar phyin.

288 rtse drug mtshams pa rnam dag don ldan.

289 rgya khri ka'i bla ma tshul khrims g.yung drung.

290 khyung dbon dam pa yab sras.

291 khro chen rgyal po.

292 brag steng rgyal po.

293 dge bshes rgyal po.

294 gling tshang rgyal po.

concerning the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] on the triad of Gya, Bö and Dren,²⁹⁵ the [Sekhar] Choknga,²⁹⁶ and the Sangdak and Dedü²⁹⁷ an extremely great number of times, and he progressively gave [teachings] on the subject of the Preliminary Practice and the Main Practice one time to each and every student. Moreover, he must have transmitted a thousand times [the vows] of those just entering the monastic discipline as well as the vows of full ordination, and he surpassed that number bestowing Bodhisattva vows.

Afterwards, with respect to the majority of people in the Kham region who came asking to meet [Shardza], he established spiritual connections for the dedicated and for hermits in the surrounding area, exemplified by the reading transmission [associated with the practices of] refuge, long-life, transference of consciousness for the living, and the recitation of the [three] essential [Bön mantras]. [61] Considering those with whom he had mere contact, [the number] even surpassed many tens of thousands. So it was that the sound of Bön, the miraculously-spoken truth, pervaded all directions and [Shardza] acted beneficially for whomever he encountered.

In short, not even once did [Shardza] refuse to give whatever ripening and liberating advice was desired, and there were also no obstacles to his spontaneous gathering of disciples. Bringing them to the ultimate however he wished, there was no one else in the

295 rgya bod dran gsum. see note above.

296 [gsas mkhar] mchog lnga. see note above.

297 gsang bdag dang bde 'dus. This appears to me to refer to the gsang bdag rtsa gsum and the bde gshegs 'dus pa. see notes above.

Land of Snow like him acting for the long-term continuity of explication and understanding ('*chad nyan*).

A few scholars, orienting themselves toward speaking and listening ('*chad nyan*), are lax in meditation practice; some, [conversely], postponing intellectual pursuits ('*chad nyan*), make a lot of effort in practice. An eminent master, however, makes even the positive qualities of contemplative accomplishment (Skt. *siddhi*) very clearly evident through explication and understanding; such activity is complete only in a great being [like] this [Shardza]. One should know that by the power of these [two], a lineage of disciples thus emerged, and even benefactors and so on were able to be edified.

The lotus garden of the sublime transmission of interpretation bloomed,
 And through the fully-expanded blossoms of proper practice,
 The daily action [of *sādhana*] caused the sweet dew of the visualized deity to
 fall; [62]
 Growing into nourishment for the teachings and living beings
 In the degenerate age.

The continuity of the ripening and liberating nectar—
 the thorough and complete Word and Treasure—
 Was perfectly conducted to the garden of impartial (*ris med*) disciples;
 The fortunate who trained as followers—a garland of blue (*utpala*) lotuses—
 Continually spread in this beautiful, wide-open and vast land.

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

The seventh [topic of eight]: How he promoted activities which [would become] his legacy [for] the teaching. It is said in a Sūtra: "With respect to the category of doctrine, there are three parts: mastery, preservation and dissemination. Regarding the method [associated] with [each of] these, there are [also] three parts, [consisting of] the production of reliquaries, bodily images and scriptures." Accordingly, the enlightened activity of establishing the doctrine in [physical] remains provides the basis for the teaching's continuity to persist for a long time for the welfare of future disciples. That very [activity] will emerge in connection with the [so-called] 'action wheel of practical conduct,' [which is understood as a complement to those of learning and meditation]. There are thus two ways one might briefly describe that process: 1) how physical embodiments of the teachings were left behind; and 2) how supporting [institutions in the form of] practice centers were developed.

As for the first, it is said:

Supports in which the Victorious One's precious teaching might remain for a long time,
 [He established] so as to increase the merit of disciples in the world; [63]
 To him who acted beneficially for whomever he encountered,
 Through the boundless supreme representations of body, speech and mind,
 I pray.

This magnificent lama [Shardza], apart from only looking to practice for his own benefit, [accomplish] others' welfare and [undertake] activities for the teachings and sentient beings, never went here and there following after the wealth associated with [performing] village rituals for the living and the dead with desire and craving. He was

also not at all like those who, making great effort at inferior kinds of ritualism, seek enjoyment through acquisitiveness.²⁹⁸ Thus, even though he dwelt in the manner of a mendicant free from worldly activity, by the power of previous aspirations and merit, all kinds of desirable things that were necessary effortlessly arose [for him]. Thus a rain of resources fell, [and yet] not even a little of those things were squandered inappropriately. He acted unstintingly for the sake of [representations of] the three [kinds of] holy objects (*rten*) and for offerings of ritual worship, and [all of his activities in this regard] cannot be precisely elaborated in words.

Nevertheless, I shall roughly outline just the most significant [of Shardza's activity in this context]. Initially, [Shardza] rendered service [by] giving the primary counsel for the construction of a new temple at Tengchen Göṅ monastery in Shardza, the monastic seat of his main teacher, the sovereign and great accomplished one of the Ra clan [Tenzin Wanggyal]. In the shrine area [dedicated to] the Loving Ones (*byams pa*) in the assembly hall of the temple, from precious materials, clay, colored cloth and medicinal earth, [Shardza] erected [representations] of the principle [figures] of Chamden, Namgyal and Chamma each of which were two stories high;²⁹⁹ and then [images] of Togyal Yekhyen, Tritsug Gyalwa, Shenlha Ökar and Sangwa Bumtri,³⁰⁰ each of which were a single story in size; plus the eight attendants of the Loving [Ones], which were life-sized. [64] In

298 thob 'jal. literally, "to measure/estimate [what one can] obtain."

299 byams ldan, rnam rgyal, byams ma. byams ldan is referred to in the NBT as byams dgon, and is thus 'The Loving One' or 'The Loving Protector', the name of the future Buddha Maitreya according to Buddhist sources. rnam rgyal is gshen rab rnam par rgyal ba, or the wrathful manifestation of Tonpa Shenrap. byams ma is 'The Loving Goddess', equivalent in function to the Buddhist sgrol ma or Tara.

300 gto rgyal ye mkhyen, khri gtsug rgyal ba, gshen lha 'od dkar. gto rgyal ye mkhen is the Teacher or Buddha of the previous age, while khri gtsug rgyal ba is the Teacher of the present age; the latter is thus an epithet of Tonpa Shenrab—the name he received with his monastic vows, and in this form he is depicted in monks' attire.

accord with what has come down from authentic ritual praxis, those [statues] were completely filled with sacred objects rare in the world such as various kinds of treasure vases [with mantras and precious substances] put inside, volumes of prayer formulas (*dharani*), and a hundred sacred objects [which were] the revealed treasure of De[Chen] Lingpa. This he accomplished without considering expenditures like the [cost of] the golden cast; thus, [the completion of the statues] were accompanied by the miracle of five [self-manifesting] exalted [features] as a sign of benefit for the teachings and sentient beings.³⁰¹ He developed the aspiration to serve the monastic estate by means of an endowment—material support in excess of forty measures of Chinese silver coin—which was in addition to resources for holy objects and material offerings.

Because [Shardza] dwelt for a long time on the throne in the remote spot of Dechen hermitage,³⁰² in later times he trained a host of disciples there, and [that site] also developed into a great retreat center. In accord with the words of Sangngak Lingpa, [Shardza] set up a meditation school (*sgom grwa*) in a retreat center in the locality known as Getang³⁰³ for the sake of those to come in the future, and he newly constructed a prayer room (*sgrub khang*) there in that place in accord with [Sangngak Lingpa's] auspicious prophecy. It was named *The Great Practice Center at Getang, the Garden of*

301 The meaning of the latter part of this sentence is somewhat opaque. The NBT tells us that the eyes of Tritsuk Gyalwa opened miraculously, but doesn't mention other self-manifesting features of this or other statues. It mentions wondrous signs, such as light blazing from the statue and a rainbow above the temple, which produced strong faith in those who were present for the consecration, but the reference to 'five [things] that are distinguished or exalted' (*khyad 'phags lnga*) is not clear to me. Dungri Shedrup Gyaltzen suggested that it might refer to various facial features plus the hand gesture of the statue.

302 bde chen ri khrod.

303 dge thang.

Blooming Lotuses.³⁰⁴ He gave permission for the construction of mendicant's quarters of various kinds for those of non-sectarian faith who had assembled [there]. [65]

In that location, with respect to the holy representations of the body, [Shardza] perfectly completed [the installation] of more than a couple of hundred bodily images made from gold and copper, including a single-storied image of Lord Nampar Gyalwa, adorned by the Six Devourers³⁰⁵ and attended by the eight great protectors; a single-storied principle figure of Chamma with a retinue of seventeen [figures]; and forty peaceful deities headed by the cubit-sized statue of Kunzang Gyalwa Dupa endowed with the six ornaments, the revealed treasure (*gter*) of Togden Atok Karpo; and an arrow-sized Shenlha [Ökar], the principle deity for confession, attended by thirty-four Buddhas about six inches in size. Additionally, he [oversaw the depiction of] such things as the ten deeds [of Tonpa Shenrap]—which were represented in especially powerful paintings—approximately thirty kinds of Desire Realm deities, [and] he meticulously completed a hundred thousand minor things.

Regarding the holy representations of speech, he published many books headed by thirteen great volumes concerning the words of the magnificent [Shardza] himself and including more than three hundred and thirty volumes of scripture concerning the Word and Treatises [of the Bönpo Canon]. He also established on the basis of material wealth

304 sgrub sde chen po dge thang padma rgyas pa.

305 za drug. These six 'eaters' refer to three pairs of divine beings—two lions, two dragons and two garudas—who manifested together with Nampar Gyalwa to destroy the forces of evil, represented by brahmins, serpents and crocodiles, in an episode from the life of Tonpa Shenrap.

such things as five great Matri and Mani prayer wheels each of which surely turned one hundred million [mantras].

In terms of the holy representations of mind, [Shardza] erected many [stupas analogous] to the [original reliquaries] containing the eight parts [of Buddha Shakyamuni's] holy remains. Because it is impossible for each and every [activity] of his giving to others and so forth to be elaborated in words, just this [will have to suffice here].

Even though he performed service for his teacher and the spiritual community (Skt. *sarīgha*), the magnificent [Shardza] initially offered a flower as a supporting gift for his requests in the presence of all the lamas [he encountered in both] earlier and later [parts of his life] from whom he had requested Bön teachings; and in the end, he offered clouds of offerings in a thanksgiving celebration embellished with the very best of whatever he possessed. [66]

He provided resources for more than a thousand offerings of gifts, material things [and compressed] tea [bricks] in order to make special donations for renovations and for prayer gatherings at many large and small monastic centers in areas ranging from Degé to Amdo; this included, for example, at the monastic seat of his teacher in Tengchen, gifts of six measures of Chinese silver [coin] as a donation for the monks' who gathered for the rainy-season retreat, two measures for the Recitation of Names ceremony,³⁰⁶ and two and a half measures for butter lamps. He also supplied provisions for many places of spiritual

306 mtshan brjod.

practice on remote mountains. Even just [hearing about] the way in which he engaged himself in this kind of pure practice consistent with Bön—including [how] in these places of religious assembly he performed mantra recitation and dedication of merit—is nectar for the ears.

Moreover, let us consider how [Shardza] constantly made timely and regular offerings. He gave offerings that sustained the ongoing (*gnyug ma*) traditions; these included butter lamps that were continually burning inside and outside his sacred residence, incense of various ingredients that was continually burning, different kinds of flowers, a number of offering bowls each [filled] with different kinds of pure [substances], and offerings sent up with the smoke fumigation rites (*lha sangs*) that were full of pure things. Along with *maṇḍala* [offerings], he performed in connection with the water-torma (*chab gtor*) and fire (*me gsur*) offerings types of ransom dedication rites (*glud bsngo*) for the general welfare of the teachings and sentient beings.

[Shardza] gave on a regular basis pure and excellent arrangements of offerings, including abundant contributions for the worship gatherings on the tenth day of the waxing and waning moon [i.e., of the lunar fortnights], and a hundred butter lamps for the new moon festival. [67] Because he truly opened up the great door of the Sky Treasury [of inexhaustible wealth]—giving things like abundant food and clothing even to numerous blind beggars, birds and dogs—even just this [example of his] single-pointed striving in the method for gathering the accumulation [of merit] demonstrates a way of life surely leading the mind [to an understanding of] the dependent nature of cause and effect, and it surely creates a sense of wonder.

As for the second [how dharmic supports [in the form of] practice centers were developed]:

To the one who well-dammed up the great lake
 of practice centers for Sūtra and Tantra,
 which are swelling with the waves of exposition, study and transmission
 and immensely filled with the jewels of realization
 of the definitive secret;
 To he who created these legacies for the teachings,
 I pray.

Through a hopeful aspiration to enhance the continuity of the practice of Sūtra, Tantra and the unsurpassed [Great Perfection] that [Shardza had made] from a time long ago, every year for as long as he lived, he progressively arranged in meditation and practice those many dozens of aspirants striving for the essential practice who continually appeared. Thus, by continuing in this way, meditation students in mountain ravines everywhere and in assemblies in remote places increased in number. All of the many great groups of yogins striving in practice who are living right now have only come into being through the enlightened motivation of the magnificent lama [Shardza].

In particular, in newly erecting the Getang Padma Gyepé Kyetsel [Center] on Shardza Yungdrung Lhunpo [Mountain], [Shardza] elevated his nephew, Lodro Gyatsho, who studied in the important central Tibetan monasteries (*bdan sa ba*), to enthronement status, and he gave him the responsibility for supervision. [68] Annually [Shardza] explained and propagated [different] kinds of ripening [empowerments], liberating [instructions] and supporting [reading transmissions], [and he similarly maintained] the continuity of instruction in the various kinds of profound advice from the early stream [of teachings].

In reliance upon the practical traditions of meditation and the methods for [deity] practice (Skt. *sādhana*) that are associated with these [textual and ritual traditions], he developed monastic centers, and he became a dominant factor in the immense work of disseminating, expanding and promoting the precious teachings. This he accomplished by splendidly bestowing the system that is consistent with the real state of things—the oral advice and reading transmission that are definitely beneficial to the teachings and sentient beings—exemplified by the offerings made at the end of the year and at the end of the lunar month.

Similarly, the reading transmission touched [Shardza's] heartson in the Amdo Ngawa region, Tsultrim Tenpé Gyaltzen, and he provided support for newly establishing the continuity of instruction and for a meditation school. Even nowadays the teachings remain there growing ever more. [Shardza] gave similar responsibilities to the great Treasure-revealer Sangngak Lingpa, his students, attendants and even to ordinary people, too. Illustrated by his setting up of the new meditation center of Changchup Jonpé Kyetsel³⁰⁷ in Pelri Rinak Jompa Yungdrung Sangwa Namchak Yangdzong,³⁰⁸ he demonstrated the kindness through which the experiential techniques of the Practice Lineage spread in all directions. His enlightened activity, which was to become [like] a harvest in which the precious teachings of Shenrap remained continually without deteriorating even to the end of time, was truly extraordinary.

307 byang chub ljon pa'i skyed tshal.

308 dpal ri ri nag 'joms pa g.yung drung gsang ba gnam lcags yang rdzong.

Similarly, there is also the greatness of the legacy of those who upheld the tradition of the magnificent lama [to consider]. As the foremost teacher Drenpa said: "Encompass everything with the view of the Great Vehicle [in] the Secret (Great Perfection) Tantras; search out the essence of meditation through the Inner Tantras; adopt and abandon [virtue and vice] through the conduct of the monastic discipline in the Outer Tantras. The unity of these three will accomplish the twofold welfare of self and others." In keeping with the meaning of what is said [here], [Shardza's] conduct, in accord with the monastic discipline, was scrupulous; because he shunned even subtle [negative] karma and its results, he became a beautiful ornament of the teaching. His meditation, in accord with Tantra, was devoted to [the stages of] service and accomplishment; because it had the authenticity of the Creation and Completion [Stages], he was elevated to the splendor of the two attainments (Skt. *siddhi*). His view, in accord with the unsurpassed [Great Perfection], maintained the continuity of experiential practice; because it made awareness beyond conceptual mind the path, it completed the permanent, primordial goal. Such is the extraordinary nature of the good, straight path of view, meditation and conduct.

In relation to scriptural exegesis, [Shardza] cut through misconceptions associated with listening and reflection and he eradicated the errors of ignorant meditation. In relation to the transmission of the Practice Lineage, the meaning of the teachings matured in his mindstream and he obtained realization of the [Bodhisattva] Grounds and Paths. In connection with the works he left behind, a foundation for the teachings was established and a spiritual system was properly organized. Such is the extraordinary nature of the [things] connected with his application of teaching, practice and enlightened activity. [70]

At all times and on all occasions, through the power of a weight that dwelled in his heart only [for] the teachings' and sentient beings' welfare, he passed his time solely in activity that was beneficial to self and others and to the teachings. Gatherings of groups of Shen[rap's followers] who proceeded in such a way increased more and more, and for as long as the teachings abide, the system of our lama will swell like a summer lake and the signs of its vast auspiciousness will prevail everywhere.

The sole basis for the expansion of tremendous merit
Is superlative representations of body, speech and mind.
Just as soon as they are established
as residents of the land,
The wonder of vast virtuous signs
among the world and its inhabitants
spreads.

For the one who is praised in the prophecies,
On the ground of the earth,
He well-constructed a place of prayer for [the tradition of] the miraculously-spoken truth.
And by the power of his damming a great lake which is the teaching of ultimate reality,
Disciples dwelt like a gaggle of geese.

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

The eighth topic [of eight]: a description of his other good qualities, which are immense. As for the holy and greatly exalted: wherever they have taken birth, the good qualities of a sacred disposition—like the rays of the sun—are naturally present. [71] Thus, even though such has [already] been discussed above in a summarized fashion, I will explain in a supplementary way the other greatnesses of the kind which are innate. Regarding these, there are two [topics] I will discuss: 1) the nature of [Shardza's] innate mental disposition; and 2) the other attributes of eminent beings [he possessed].

As for the first [of these two]:

Possessed of a sincere temperament,
 deep in mind and noble in word;
 Having exhausted partiality for visible appearances,
 the fetters of this life,
 He was unopposed to anyone,
 far greater than everyone.
 Such was his pure conduct,
 And to him, I pray.

A holy one, having been born into a lineage that is noble and excellent, has a depth of mind and very thick ears; thus, he never listens to such things as flattery and [never experiences] the harmful vicissitudes of attachment and aversion to the pleasant and the unpleasant [associated with it]. His mind remains in the innate state at all times, and he arrives at certainty in his mind regarding whatever great and small actions [are to be undertaken in any given circumstance.] When he became such a [person, Shardza], maintaining his own independence, from that point on did not canvass the opinions of all sorts of people and give his autonomy over to others. He was as solid as Mt. Meru and as

majestic. Because he was noble in whatever words he spoke, he did not fraternize with others at an inappropriate time. [72] He also did not possess the arrogance of [assuming that] there is no one with whom dialogue is worthwhile. He completely made his words clear when the time was right; thus, his words weighed heavy in the eyes of everyone, and opportunities for them to be observed [in public] opened up.

Most people nowadays are amazed by those charlatans who wear the garb of Siddhas and Treasure-revealers. [People] revere them, [but] not long after a connection has been established, they speak ill of them. [But Shardza's] way of approaching things was never anything like this scheme of short-term titillation, [and] that, I think, is truly wonderful.

Because [Shardza] was very direct [in communicating] from the depths of his mind and he lived genuinely, he straightforwardly carried out without partiality whatever was to be done in the two spheres [of the secular and the religious]. He was therefore conscientious with regard to dishonest behavior and was a source of singular delight for the wise; it seems as if he was a person who proceeded very directly, including in his manner of speaking, without doing such things as currying favor with celebrities or denigrating subordinates.

With regard to all the Buddhist schools in Tibet, [Shardza] did not engage criticism of partisan views except [within the context of advocating] training in Pure Perception (i.e., the contemplative practice of seeing all phenomena as equally pure). Apart from immaculately upholding his own system, he never mixed up one [lineage's teaching] and another like [in the example of one who confuses] fish and tadpoles. Not only did he possess a peerless enlightened motivation (*bodhicitta*) that was solely beneficial for all teachings, but he also was completely at home in the pure lifestyle of scholars and

practitioners. As revealed by the flowers of praise that many great ones of other tenet systems rained down [upon him], he thus became the crowning glory of all the teachings. [73]

[Shardza] never performed town rituals for [fulfillment] of his personal desires, or engaged in kinds of wrong livelihood like acquisitively striving for profit.³⁰⁹ He never took any pleasure in various improper desires that could have led to corrupt ways of behaving in all kinds of situations, including: giving wrong interpretations even though one doesn't know [the scripture]; giving advice even though one doesn't listen [to the problem]; and wrongly assuming oneself to be a leader even though one doesn't know how. Save for merely imitating [the customs of] others [as appropriate], he did not give his heart to any worldly activities whatsoever.

All the many great ones of the world bowed [to Shardza] and he was made a worthy recipient of offerings. Nevertheless, due to his humility and his ascetic deportment, he passed his life with a carefree disposition. He surely was a magical being and he became the king of all renunciates. He never acted like those who, abandoning the Bön and the lamas from long ago, are quick to seek after the most recent [popular ones], compete with others, and disparage [others] out of envy. Not even the scent of the kind of haughtiness associated with scholars or the foolishness of practitioners arose in him; thus, he really lived in a humble way that was in harmony with everyone. Nevertheless, when this

309 rnyed pas rnyed tshol. A general term included among a list of five inappropriate ways of making a living (*log 'tsho nga*), it literally says "having acquired, seeking to acquire" or, alternatively, "seeking to acquire more than what has been acquired."

quality was well-developed in the end, a strength of heart that was consistent with his innate nature abounded remarkably.

More than everyone else, his character was stable like a mountain; he was not at all in conflict with Bön; and he had the power capable of overwhelming all with his splendor; thus, he fully dwelt in the exalted status of a fearless hero. [74] If you think about these [qualities], it seems as if [Shardza's] is a life-story in which even the innate good qualities of our magnificent lama are more wondrous than [the good qualities developed over time by] others.

As for the second [topic of two, the other attributes of eminent beings [Shardza possessed]:

The stain of wrongdoing was absent even in his dreams;
 His devotion to the teaching endured even at the cost of his life;
 All of his activities were undertaken only for others' welfare;
 To he who maintained the sacred way of life of the great exalted ones,
 I pray.

How he also had other great qualities: when the time was right, the magnificent [Shardza] became a leading caretaker of the teachings; thus he led a religious life consistent with the tradition of the teachings. Nowadays, there are some people who, although they have a high realization of the view, clandestinely do whatever [they find] pleasurable. Most people wrongly assume [something to be] yoga by its name [alone], and engage in sinful beer [drinking] without giving it any thought. Reflecting upon how the greatness of the teachings is diminished by such activities, Shardza, despite the fact that the vastness of realization had sprung up within him, primarily engaged in the outer

conduct [set forth] in the Discourses (Skt. *sūtra*) and the Monastic Discipline (Skt. *vinaya*), and he devoted himself to keeping the comportment associated with the twelve ascetic virtues.

Thus, when one observes, [one finds that Shardza upheld] a general standard of conduct in which there was nothing disagreeable. Even with respect to the subtle points of the precepts, he did not follow along with what he saw others doing under, for example, the influence of the exigencies of time and place; he engaged in his practical affairs according to what is stated in the Monastic Discipline, up to and including the way he sewed his clothes and prepared his drinking water. [75]

[Shardza] excised the root of ego-clinging from the depths of his mind and he eradicated the error of clinging to material reality. Thus, just like an *arhat* for whom the stain of transgression is impossible, his inner and outer deeds were never influenced by any defilement whatsoever. By the power of his pure spirit, all humans and demigods gathered under his influence and showed respect and dedication. He was arrayed as the crown jewel of all. All of his attendants [beheld him respectfully] in the corners of their eyes, and thus even all those who [merely] assembled for his oral advice became committed to looking after the precepts, and they thus became close friends in the teaching's unfolding.

Most people these days, wrongly assuming that they are performing [the work] of the teaching, estimate that just mutual confirmation with others of one's own greatness, the splendor of one's wealth, and the development of one's shrewd resourcefulness is greatly beneficial for the teachings. Unlike the way of these people, [Shardza] ascertained in himself the key points, just as they are, of the essential Sūtra and Tantra according to

what has come forth from the oral heritage of the scholars and adepts of Zhangzhung and Tibet—the authentic teaching of the Victorious One. Because he acted as a principle guide for others while relying on that [essential teaching], he became a close friend of the teaching. Although he was everywhere burdened with the weight of responsibility for thinking about the teachings alone, he [voluntarily] took up hardships without thinking of his responsibility in such a way. [76]

[Shardza] gave the initial precepts (*mgo lung*) for the religious activities associated with the ten types of *bon*, including written composition and exegesis, and he arranged the assembly of monks in a circle according to the [classificatory system of] the "Four Pairs" [of male and female beings on the early Buddhist path, ranging from 'Stream-enterers' to 'Non-returners']—i.e., the "Eight Results" [of the Hearer's path]—which made the monastic community [like] the principle [deity in a *maṇḍala*]. He provided these kind of harmonious conditions [for them], and day and night he continually disseminated commentary and instruction. Endangering his own life [by doing] such things, he maintained only reverence for the teaching in his heart, cherishing it for his entire life. He also bore responsibility for the doctrine at that time, and he remarked that "even though you might not be able to bear [the responsibility] similarly, there is no meaning in the nominal designation 'doctrine-holder' if you cannot even generate a little concern for the welfare of the teaching." Thus, if one thinks well about it, it is sure that he was a person of great significance.

There is also the manner in which he looked after living beings' welfare by way of these principles, [which we shall now discuss]. There are some gluttons who realize their own aims through [engaging activities] such as town rituals that purport to be for the

welfare of living beings. [But] in contrast to their way of thinking, [Shardza] looked after many non-sectarian disciples with the purity of the highest aspiration which accepts responsibility for others' well-being. [Shardza] gave admonishing reminders associated with the precepts to the monastic community and, disseminating the code of conduct for [what is to be] adopted and renounced, set things in proper order. He also taught lessons on the cause and effect of virtue and vice in the towns within his sphere of activity; and, instituting a local tradition of sending virtue for individuals living and deceased, he connected them to the path to liberation. [77]

Moreover, with regard to virtuous conduct, up to and including the four daily activities [of standing, walking, sitting, and lying down], his non-analytical recollection [of virtue] did not diminish. He was a great Bodhisattva who was beneficial for everyone he met, as illustrated by his 'sealing', [i.e., consciously completing his activities,] with the prayer that his sphere of activity would be completely purified. [In] all of whatever he did, there was never anything taking place except for action for the well-being of others. His physical form was not to be compared with other ordinary, ego-centric persons; he had acquired the supreme liberation of eminent holy beings. I have said a little about these things as a supplementary topic.

He is the one who has the mettle
 personifying the Three Secrets [of adamant body, speech and mind]
 Without any taint of fault whatsoever,
 And well-embraced by the splendor of praiseworthy qualities;
 The discerning one in the midst of the mountains
 Renowned in history.

He has gone far beyond the realm of grasping the perceiver and the perceived
 And gained mastery over the mind of pure higher intent;
 He is thus a great man of exalted, holy character,
 Unrestrained by the mind of ordinary beings. [78]

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

The second topic [of two]: A synopsis of the [true story's] meaning.³¹⁰

He realized the full compass of hearing, reflecting and meditating
 for his own welfare,
 And expanded the enlightened work
 of explanation, practice and applied activity
 for other's welfare.
 For the welfare of both,
 he possessed the magnificence of learning, discipline and goodness.
 To the feet of the incomparable lama,
 I supplicate.

A summary of the biography of this great being: Regarding his own welfare,
 [Shardza] abundantly received from an uninterrupted lineage all the stages of the ripening

310 This division refers to the following from above: "Part two: how [Shardza] acted for the welfare of sentient beings in accord with the prophecy. This consists of three [aspects] in reality: 1) his outer biography, commonly known to all; 2) his special inner biography; and 3) his secret biography, which is even more extraordinary than that. [17] The first —[his outer biography]—consists of two parts: the true [story] and a synopsis of the true story's meaning."

[empowerments], liberating [instructions] and supporting [transmissions] for Sūtra, Tantra and the Great Perfection, and he reached the ocean's depths of what is to be received. With respect to the view, meditation and action together with the vows and results associated with all of the [spiritual] vehicles, he [developed] a mental discrimination that arose from reflection by means of scripture, reasoning and esoteric instructions. Because he obtained the power associated [with these accomplishments], he arrived at the depths of the [underlying] 'suchness' of philosophical tenets. Also, because he gained mastery over the treasure of the mind of enlightenment (Skt. *bodhicitta*), the concentration on the two stages [of deity yoga], and the practical experience of the view and meditation of the unsurpassed [Great Perfection] vehicle, he completely perfected all the good qualities of the grounds and paths.

Regarding the welfare of others, [Shardza] erected the great pillar of his exegetical tradition for all the systems of Outer Tantras, Inner Tantras and Secret Tantras. [79] From the abridged Monastic Discipline at the nadir to the unsurpassed [Great Perfection] vehicle at the zenith, he blazed a trail for the chariot of [his own] experiences and for that of the Practice Lineage. As a support for [his tradition], he commissioned representations of the three kinds of sacred objects and he built a number of gathering places for study and practice, thereby unfolding the enlightened activity associated with the "action wheel of practical work," [one of three sphere's of a Buddha's influence]. He thus acted to the enormous benefit of living beings.

Regarding the welfare of both [self and others], [Shardza] became a great lord of speech who was able to make all the Collected Scriptures [of Sūtra teaching (Skt. *pitakas*)] clear in the proper way with a [capable] mind that came about innately and

through meditation; he thus came to be the crown jewel of scholars. There was no corruption at all with respect to even the subtle infractions of the three vows, and he was not [one of those] with a feline disposition—the model for a deceitful way of life; [rather] he was established in the ethical discipline that delights the Victorious Ones fully in every respect, and he thus became the best of the Noble [monks] (Skt. *bhikṣu*).

According to the prophetic praise [given] by [his teacher], Rapa Drupchen ("the great accomplished one of the Ra clan"), [Shardza] disseminated limitless [numbers of] participatory lectures (*'chad nyan*) beneficial to the teaching and he furthered the continuity of the ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] for non-partisan masters of the teaching. Thus it came to pass that the teachings were unfolded and remained for a long time, and this is the most important of all the good and wonderful things he did.

In ways such as these did [Shardza] consummate the twofold welfare of self and others, and he remained as the crowning glory of all the teachings and living beings. [This have I] spoken as a general summary of our magnificent lama's life-story. [80]

With a deeply entrenched root—listening, reflection and meditation,
A vast breadth—learning, discipline and goodness,
And well-ripened fruit—explanation, practice and activity,
A second wish-fulfilling tree came to the land of Dokham.

The song proclaimed by the learned one in the mountain's midst says,
"There are nine ways of showing one to be sacred."
Magnificent lama, the protector of this time,
Are you not the only one to possess [these qualities]?

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

The second [topic of three, his special inner biography]: Speaking a little about the extraordinary inner biography: This holy, magnificent and noble one himself, duly entering upon the ultra-pure path, engaged in practice. Even though he directly realized [the true nature] of each and every [phenomenon] and he had countless auspicious signs of the two attainments (Skt. *siddhi*) consistent with [that realization], he was proficient at guarding the depths of his mind and at keeping secrets. Although there was therefore not a lot that was seen or heard [from him on this topic], if we expand a little based on the supplementary points that did escape from his lips, there are two [topics to discuss]: 1) how he possessed the good qualities of the attainments; and 2) how he mastered the profound Bön.

He saw the visage of the supreme deity allied with the three roots, [81]
 And he bound the guardians into service through the spontaneous Four
 Actions.
 He brought the Four Visions to culmination through his mastery of Channels
 and Winds;
 He has perfected the signs of the attainments,
 And to him, I pray.

There were countless amazing signs of [Shardza's] contemplative attainments (Skt. *siddhi*), but if I am to describe only a few illustrations, [they are as follows]: Previously when [Shardza] went to the region of Ü, he traveled to the monastery of Menri, the pure

source of the precious teaching of Shen[rap]. At that time, he met a person residing in a body of light with the attributes of gentleness and chastity—the master of the teachings, the great and magnificent Nyammé [Sherap Gyaltzen] himself. [Shardza] requested a blessing and light rays of three [colors]—white, red and blue—arose from the three places of [Nyammé's] body (the head, throat and heart) in a distinct sequence and yet instantaneously, and a definitive understanding that the Four Empowerments had been obtained was born [in Shardza]. While smiling, [Nyammé] gave confirmation [of this, saying]: "Become a master of the completely perfect [teaching] of Sūtra and Tantra!" Thus [Shardza] was empowered as a special successor (*rgyal mtshab*) [of Nyammé].

It seems that the meaning of this is also confirmed in some of [Shardza's] instruction manuals, in which he says [to his disciples]: "Become a beautiful ornament of the teaching of the Lord of Menri." Later on the extraordinary power and entrustment of the lama's blessings were granted to him, and he was even asked to perform service which included [composing] practice manuals and a guru yoga text of the precious Lord [of Menri].

When he traveled to Kong[po] Bönri, on the central peak of Gyer mountain, he actually met Kuntu Zangpo, naked and unadorned, in a rainbow canopy of light. [82] After that took place, it is said that his awareness (*rig pa*) was naturally established and the energy of his realization became vast.

At his own monastery, when [Shardza] did the Long-life Practice of Drenpa [Namkha], he had a vision of the deity and the celestial palace consistent with the iconographical description, and the offering water from the long-life vase boiled, and

longevity pills multiplied inside and outside the prayer room, and a green sprout grew from the *tsedrang* (*tshe 'brang*, "breast of life") offering cake.

On one occasion in which [Shardza] was staying in the guardian's temple, he actually saw the faces of the immortal father and sons, [Drenpa Namkha, Tsewang Rinzin and Pema Tongdrol], and they bestowed their blessings. Yeshe Walmo was committed to his service, and her face appeared [to him] in manifest reality, in contemplative experience, and in his dreams. It is said that many signs arose of their close association.

At a later point in time, when [Shardza] was sixty-five years of age, [the following took place]: [It is said that] when the Bön is profound, the deterrents are [also] profound; [this story is] an example of that. A certain type of malevolent spirit (*dam sri*), who had a wrong view concerning the magnificent lama's ever-greater expansion of the teaching of the ultimate truth, manifested all kinds of illusory apparitions [conjured up] by countless ghosts in order to create hindrances, and they became actually visible. When that happened, [Shardza] fought back. He remained in a single session of meditative absorption (*samadhi*) for six days and nights. Relying upon the Creation Stage [practice] of the meditational deity (*yi dam*) Walpur Nakpo, he performed ritual service, accomplished [the result] and enacted the work [of the wrathful deity] extensively and in full detail. As a result, the malevolent spirit together with his followers were decisively defeated. It is said that an odious king of demons (*gdon*) was placed under the command [of Shardza], and thus made a promise not to do harm to those [disciples] keeping the [Tantric] commitments. [83] That having come to pass, [the king of demons] was not an antagonistic spirit for those who held the lineage of the magnificent [Shardza], and it seems that he became one through whom auspicious blessings arose. "I have shown only

a hint of wrathful activity for the sake of the teachings and sentient being," [Shardza] said, and also did.

In addition, when he was performing the ritual service and accomplishment for those including the five supreme meditational deities, there were manifestations seen by everyone: there was a warm feeling and a blessed fragrance, sparks proliferated in the prayer room, and the offering vase (*gta' chen*) boiled. Although oral accounts of such things appeared copiously, a definitive record did not appear in writing. Yet I did not take the trouble of writing [this] as in the case of a blind-faith disciple [exaggerating to the point of] making his lama a fraud; [I did so] only as a way of creating faith in [Shardza's] good qualities of inner direct realization—the brilliant majesty that is a fitting witness to the stages of the path of Sūtra and Tantra—and in his divine visions and prophecies. Just this will have to suffice.

The second topic [of two, how he mastered the profound Bön]:

By the Victorious Ones and the Noble Assembly
 In the Pure Land of "Below None" (Skt. *Akaniṣṭha*),
 He was entrusted with command
 of all the deep and vast categories of Bön
 And he gained mastery
 over the treasury of Bön Sūtra and Tantra.
 To he who obtained this special transmission of Pure Perception,
 I pray.

The majority of the doctrine-holders in Tibet of such [family lineages] as Dru, Zhu, Pa and Me'u made foundational the ripening [empowerments], liberating [instructions] and the dialectics that were consistent with the sections of Bön teaching that were

associated with their respective special transmissions (*bka' babs*). [84] Even though each of these [transmissions] was immense, they nevertheless received the Sūtra, Tantra and Great Perfection [teachings] from all regions, took up the practices, and, spreading [the teachings] to others, trained disciples.

This approach became a special attribute of the magnificent [Shardza] himself. One should know from what was written just briefly above how, cultivating the continuity of the long-standing systems of each of these [lineages], he disseminated [the teaching]. Moreover, he received and made foundational all that remained in existence of the unbroken Long Lineage.

This being the case, [let us examine] how he obtained the seal of approval for the Special Transmission of the Near Lineage: in the ultra-pure Pure Realm of "Below None" (Skt. *akanista*) that he personally experienced in a pure vision, he had a genuine visionary encounter. There were a thousand Buddhas and a vast number of special transmission [holders] encircling the Buddhas of the three times; lamas, wisdom-holders, celestial goddesses and the lineage [holders] of the profound path of Tantra and the Mind Discernment encircling the immortal mother [Satrik Ersang], her sons and [Tonpa] Shen[rap]; and a gathering of tantric Bodhisattva (*ye gshen sems dpa'*), and the lineage [holders] of the unsurpassed definitive truth encircling the five [Buddha] families of Kun[tu] Zang[po]. Through their wisdom-minds [Shardza] was graced with a blessing and he received the initiation that is [conducted] through symbols; the feeling arose that his mind and theirs were inseparably merged. As a result of his one-pointed supplication, the [canonical tradition of] the Word (*bka'*) and the Treasure (*gter*), which included Sūtra, Tantra and the Great Perfection, remained in snowy Tibet, accompanied by the fully

complete ripening [empowerments], liberating [instructions] and supporting [reading transmissions]. [85] A special feeling for seeking out, receiving and accomplishing [these teachings] had been born in him.

After that, [Shardza] also acquired many kinds of rare textual traditions, and, putting them into practice himself, he performed the entrustment ritual (*bka' gtad*) equally for all of them. If he would have disseminated this scriptural tradition by making it into a system of a Near Lineage, I think that it would have had a blessed power and that it would have been exceptionally valuable. However, the holy [Shardza] reflected on how it is difficult for others to comprehend this sort of thing and how various types of charlatans insidiously disparage and exploit the teachings. Thus when he was offered praise and asked [to do so], he was unyielding, and he did not in fact undertake [this kind of a] ritual performance. Even so, he did give to everyone the ritual entrustment consistent with the tradition of reading transmission and empowerment in the texts of the Master Teacher Özer Pakmé ("Limitless Light," *'od zer dpag med*). Because just that was sufficient for [maintaining] the continuity of blessings, his disciples were not at all lacking in good fortune.

There is a viewpoint saying how there is a kind of Near Lineage associated with individual [teachings of Shardza] such as the Tantra and Sadhana Sections, but I have not heard an extensive presentation of this. I have written [only about] the kind of things concerning this Near Lineage that have been spoken exactly like this directly to me. Although it is not at all clear from the extensive biographical account personally spoken [by Shardza], there is, roughly speaking, what is evident in the words he spoke to his holy heart-son from the Ngawa region, the supreme emanation of Tashi Khyil [monastery],

Tsultrim Tenpé Gyaltzen; [86] in the supplication [found] in the biography [of Shardza that he] prepared, it states: "In the limitlessly vast Pure Realms, amazing and pristine/ like searching for motes of dust, he saw the faces of billions of enlightened guides./ To he who obtained the nectar of the profound and vast instructions,/ the Pure Perception for which he insatiably asked, I pray." From what is said here one really understands. Specifically, the magnificent lama himself gained mastery over the treasures of Bön and thus, by utilizing the infinite approaches to Bön day and night, he obtained the Special Transmission [i.e., the 'Descent of the Word' (*bka' babs*)]. How he did so has been mentioned above. From among the countless kinds of Pure Visions and [the various teachings and prophecies] consistent with them that emerged as Oral Lineage, one example [can be culled] from the *Remembered Chronicles* of the Great Treasure-[revealer] Sangngak Lingpa, in which it says: "Afterwards there will be one called Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen/ from the sky-vault of [his] Mind Treasure, the dynamic energy of the essential heart/ will come the Five Treasures and textual cycles on the Great Perfection's profound meaning/ spreading widely what is profound in its freshness."

In accord with this prophecy, the magnificent [Shardza] was taken as a disciple by the Immortal Victorious One [Drenpa Namkha], father and sons, long ago, and he was brought to spiritual maturity through initiation into their great *maṇḍala*. The seeds of his aspiration, which deeply affirmed the instructions, were awakened at the right time. Thus, it appears that he was a person who dwelt in the exalted status of a Treasure-revealer in this life. [87] When the name Treasure-revealer is imputed, bestowed and accepted [with regard to Shardza], it is clearly evident that [what is meant is that] he was a person who held authority over many profound treasures.

Reflecting on his having taken responsibility for the explanation and practice of the general teaching, [Shardza] made his principle 'pillar' the continuation of the life of the teaching [which he accomplished] by disseminating the ripening [empowerments], liberating [instructions], and the exegesis associated with the Old Treasure (*gter rnying*) cycles; thus he truly did not give any importance at all to New Bön treasures. He said that nowadays, when the world is full of things that are like treasure but are not [real] treasure, it is very important not to be discouraged about the Victorious One's teachings. He also used to say that if we do not properly establish a foundation through the [different] types of old treasure, then a couple of New Bönpos are not going to come along to hold the fort (*sa zin po*); it is evident that he thought refuting [the New Bönpos] was a necessary goal.

He [also] said that from the time he was small, past-life memories and a prolific capacity for composing verse would suddenly erupt. Even so, since [these things merely] appeared as a reflection of his meditative experiences, he maintained his equanimity.

In addition, [let us provide] a brief summary of how the Special Transmission [occurred] for [Shardza's works entitled] the *Dzokchen Kusum Rangshar* (*The Natural Dawning of the Three Bodies of the Great Perfection*), the *Kundu Zangpo Nyingtik* (*The Heart-Essence of the All-Good One*), and the *Tsasum Yongdü* (*The Complete Assembly of the Three Roots*). First, the set of teachings of the *Dzokchen Kusum Rangshar*: The great Treasure-revealer Sangngak Lingpa revealed a yellow scroll from the summit of Lhangdrak Norbu, and as the owner of the root text he specially transmitted it to the magnificent [Shardza]. Accordingly, the Lord of Siddhas and Shardza, [like] father and son together codified the practice manual [or *sādhana* text] for the *Tsasum* and the

empowerment text [to be used in conjunction with this new treasure]. [88] Afterwards, holding the welfare of the teaching as the key point by means of the abridged empowerment ritual of the treasure text and the root verses [in] the guidebook, he combined in essence the wisdom-intention that has emerged from the Long Lineage that [includes] the general category of the Mind Discernment (*sems phyogs*), Oral Lineage (*snyan brgyud*), and the Great Perfection, and he widely disseminated a guidebook on the ritual of the four empowerments and the unity of the Great Seal (Skt. *mahāmudrā*) and the Great Perfection.

The foundational Special Transmission for the magnificent [Shardza]—that which emerged from the earth treasure of the great precious Treasure-revealer [Sangngak Lingpa]—along with the Long Lineage—the cycles of Mind Discernment—and the Near Lineage of the Special Transmission of all the Bön teachings [given] to the magnificent [Shardza], were compiled and disseminated. Thus, the Canonical Word (*bka'*) and Treasure (*gter*) were combined in one stream. Therefore, wherever it is classified—as Long Lineage or Near Lineage—there is sufficient reason [in either case].

Within the subdivisions in the *Yangzap Namkha Dzö* (*The Profoundly Deep Treasury of the Sky*) [authored by Shardza], there are two [categories relevant here]: 1) the Special Transmission of the Canonical Word Lineage (*bka' rgyud*); and 2) the Special Transmission of Mind Treasure (*dgongs gter*). The first [topic], the special transmission of the Canonical Word Lineage, refers to the cycle of the *Deshek Düpa Kunzang Nyingthik* (*The Heart-Essence of the All-Good One, the Embodiment [of all] the Bliss-gone [Buddhas]*). To elaborate: in the power place of Nyakshö Drakyer, [Shardza] stayed in a crimson-colored cave; at that time, he was looking through and reflecting on [texts]

such as those of the Oral Lineage (*snyan brgyud*) cycle. Faith distinctly manifested [in him] and as a result, he made single-pointed supplications to the lineage lamas. [89] At daybreak one morning, he had an authentic vision of the five families [or aspects] of Kuntu Zangpo. Within the space of that realization, the Gyalthab Chiluk³¹¹ empowerment was conferred [upon him]; he received blessings [and] manifested the view and realization of the unsurpassed Great Perfection, [and] all the meanings of the three sections of the Great Perfection became clear in his heart. It is said that he thereafter attained natural stability in awareness (*rig pa*).

Based upon [these experiences], [Shardza] later codified, on Yungdrung Lhunpo [mountain] in eastern Dza, the *Yingrik Rinpoche Dzö* (*The Precious Treasury of the Expanse and Awareness*)—a commentary on the meaning of all the sections of Tantra of the Unsurpassed [Great Perfection] Vehicle—through the dynamic energy of his wisdom-mind. Even more significant than [the fact that he wrote such a text] is that it was even more extraordinary than all the [other available] approaches to the esoteric instructions of the Great Perfection.

These lineages, [which concern] the profound essential points of Radiant Light Direct Crossing (*od gsal thod rgal*) mentally [transmitted] through the Supreme Teacher who is primordially itself—the deep meaning [centering on] the luminosity within the heart—were lacking [someone] to widely and pervasively disseminate them. Even many previous generations of scholars were hesitant to untie with their voice what the wisdom goddesses had bound with the symbol of the *yungdrung*.

311 see n. 133 above.

Yet, [Shardza] was encouraged by the statements (*lung*) of an ocean of celestial goddesses, the owners of the Word (*bka'*). Specifically, the knot [in] the central channel was untied and he recalled his previous lives. By virtue of this, he disclosed the hidden meaning; he displayed [the teachings] nakedly in the world of those endowed with fortune in degenerate times, [and] this is certainly one aspect of the extraordinary, special attributes of this lama. [90]

[Shardza] developed the enlightened activity [consisting of his textual] cycle, the Riknga Deshek Düpa Kuntu Zangpo Tuktik (The Heart Essence of the All-Good One, the Amalgamation of All the Bliss-gone [Buddhas] of the Five Families),³¹² which is the ultra-quintessence of all that ripens and liberates within the three sections of the Great Perfection. [This he disseminated] based upon his realization of the wisdom-mind overflowing from within, together with the [appropriate] initiation rites and instruction book.

These [teachings of Shardza's] are consistent with the Long Lineage of the Canonical Word Lineage [transmitted] by speech [from one generation to another] (*bka' nas bka' brgyud*) and, because the Near Lineage's blessed experiential wisdom is also present, [Shardza] himself said that there is also no contradiction [in classifying this text] according to both [lineages]. Nevertheless, the scriptural terms show that it was as if he disseminated [this teaching] in service to the expression of the Long Lineage; thus I have included [the text] in the Special Transmission of the Canonical Word Lineage (*bka' brgyud*).

312 rigs lnga bde gshegs 'dus pa kun tu bzang po'i thugs tig.

The second [topic of two], the special transmission of the Mind Treasure (*dgongs gter*), [refers to] the cycles of *The Complete Assembly of the Three Roots*. When [Shardza] was staying in an isolated place on Yungdrung Lhunpo [mountain], one day, in a mass of five rainbow-colored lights—the manifestation aspect of Radiant Light—he saw the face of the lord and protector of living beings, Tsewang Rinzin, and [the lord], bestowing a symbolic blessing, dissolved into him. The experiential realization that [the lord's] mind and his own were inseparably merged dawned in him. It is said that a clear vision was born [to Shardza] of being [an emanation of] the Tantric lineage master [Tsewang Rinzin] in all of his lifetimes. [Shardza] remained in equipoise for a long time in that state. Through the dawning of the unceasing energy of awareness, he composed the cycles of *The Complete Assembly of the Three Roots* in accord with the unobstructed clarity (*lam gsal ba*) of his mind. [91] Afterwards, he also arranged these ritual texts within himself without fabricating [anything]; thus, he in fact said that "it is also appropriate to designate [these] as Mind Treasure." Even though such things as the [narrative] treasure history (*gter 'byung*) of these [texts] is not explicit or elaborate, faith is sure to be inspired since [these texts] are definitively established as Mind Treasure itself.

Similarly, his other [famous writings, *The Five Treasures* ought to be classified on the side of treasure. As it is prophesied in the *Drenpé Katang*³¹³ (*The Remembered Chronicles*) and also stated by the magnificent [Shardza] himself regarding the writing of these great treasures of his: It is special [in a way] unlike other written compositions;

313 dran pa'i bka' thang.

even though the words were written according to whatever descended through his intellect, the sudden eruptions of meaning in his mind were mostly organized. He prayed to his special [personal] deity on the few different occasions in which these [revelations] were not clear, and the following day he would be able to untie [the interpretive problems] through his mind, without looking at the text [he had written down]. On a few occasions, he wrote based on explanations from others that took place in his contemplative experiences and his dreams. He truly told me that "good signs arose in abundance, [such as] the wisdom goddesses encouraging me with songs they sung, and giving me confidence with the words 'well done'."

This being the case, wherever one classifies [these teachings]—as Mind Treasure, Pure Vision, or Oral Lineage—it is evident that they belong to the category of Treasure (*gter ma*), and thus they are not to be compared to the treatises of ordinary people. [92] This is very important for those who follow him to know. The words expressed in this context I have spoken based on those things that I myself have seen and heard; it is permissible [to say] that the magnificent lama himself is my witness.

Without wrongly assuming that [black] Tantric substances
and the false magic of spirits (*'byung po*)
is the realization of the path,
like brass posing as gold,
by the power of calm abiding, special insight, and the vital energy and mind,
his attainments manifested
like the light of gold beneath the ground
the hidden became clear.
Why is it amazing that he speaks scriptures and reasonings

that put to shame all the assemblies of scholars in Zhangzhung and Tibet?
 Did not the Victorious Ones, having made the treasury
 of the extraordinary definitive secret Bön,
 give it to you?

The third [topic of three], the life-story that is said to be even more extraordinary [than what has already been recounted]: the magnificent lama himself is a teacher who emanated out of compassion [and] arrived in human form. He enjoyed a treasure of good qualities that are not different from [those of] the Victorious One and the Noble Assembly. If we describe just a part of the way he possessed a life of depth and vastness that is uncommon to any person at all, whether superior or inferior, there are two [topics to consider]: 1) how he was inseparable from the sovereign of the [Buddha] families, the holder of the [eternal] *yungdrung*; and 2) how [he possessed] an infinite [number of] liberated qualities associated with the three secrets [of body, speech and mind]. [93]

As for the first:

To you, the great sovereign of all the [Buddha] families and *mandalas*,
 The source of the supreme and common attainments (Skt. *siddhi*) without exception,
 The owner of all the Practice Lineage's treasures of the definitive secret [truth],
 [And] the mighty holder of the [eternal] *yungdrung*,
 I pray.

The holy [Shardza] himself was a great being who was inseparable from the Victorious Ones in ultimate truth. In terms of conventional truth, while holding [a place]

in myriad streams of successive rebirths as one who was learned and accomplished, he acted very vastly for the benefit of disciples. I have given some indication above as to how. A full account of the reality [of each of those rebirths] should be known from the individual life-stories [of each figure in question].

That being the case, [Shardza] dwelt in an exalted state that was never separate from all the Victorious Ones [with their] noble, holy assemblies, the wisdom of their hearts, and the work of their enlightened actions. He became a great being who was undifferentiated from the universal form of all the Buddhas of the three [kinds of] bodies, the sovereign master of all the *mandalas* of the three roots, the great wielder of the [eternal] *yungdrung*. [94]

Moreover, there is no other source of refuge anywhere that is not included in the three roots: the lama who is the root of blessing and empowerment, the meditational deity who is the root of all the supreme and ordinary attainments (Skt. *siddhi*), and those who take care of action, the spirit warriors and celestial goddesses (Skt. *dāka* and *ḍākinī*) who are the root of all enlightened activity. All of them are known to be solely the play of the primordial awareness of the great wielder of the [eternal] *yungdrung*, the source of all [Buddha] families and mandalas. He awakened as a great being who was inseparable from the mind of [the three roots]; thus, even though he stayed everywhere as a deity, a lama, a celestial goddess, and so forth, there is no contradiction. He became a great being who, only as a great Noble [monk], performed the myriad activities of all of them.

The second [topic of two, how he possessed an infinite number of liberated qualities associated with the three secrets of body, speech and mind]:

The supreme wisdom body is equal to the far reaches of space;

The sound of indestructible speech is taught in individual languages;
 The deep, secret mind encompasses all knowable things;
 I pray to the inconceivable secret.

The magnificent lama [Shardza] was of one taste mentally with all the Victorious Ones; thus he also came to hold in common with them the entire myriad [kinds of] greatness associated with their special qualities. If we summarize these [kinds of] greatness of [the Buddhas'] special qualities, they can be included within the three inner aspects of body, speech and mind. [95] It would be endless [to explain] how this is so from the perspective of the attributes associated with [each of these inner aspects]; however, [let us] consider the essence [of each in turn].

The natural wisdom body is beyond the realm of the physical; thus, even though it is not established as material substance or matter with [substantial] characteristics, it miraculously manifests before the face of others. Thus it resembles the boundlessness of the element of space. The indestructible speech is beyond the realm of deliberate action; thus, even though it is not established by way of its own character as sounds and words, it transforms into whatever respective language [is appropriate for] the six classes of living beings. The deep and secret mind is equivalent to the expanse of the Abiding Reality (*gnas lugs*) just as it is; thus, even though it is beyond [even] the realm of the inexpressible, it thoroughly encompasses all modes of appearance of knowable things in their multiplicity. [Such are the attributes of] a great being.

This being the case, from the perspective of the essence (*ngo bo*), he fully actualized wisdom through the realization of ultimate reality just as it is, and thus he dwelt as a great being who [possessed] the greatness of the dimension of the Abiding Reality. And by the

power of that [realization], he spontaneously completed all the auspicious good qualities associated with the domain of peace (i.e., *nirvāṇa*). From the perspective of the attributes (*rnam pa*), he acted for the welfare of limitless disciples through all modes of appearance of knowable things in their multiplicity, and he thus he [possessed] the greatness that is evident in the phenomenal realm. And through the power of that [action], he gained mastery over all the auspicious good qualities associated with the domain of existence (i.e., *saṃsāra*).

In short, he was established as the crowning glory of all of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*—the sovereign of all the Victorious Ones; thus it is said that this is just a fraction of his good qualities. [96] Knowing him to have a character that far surpasses the boundaries of ordinary people's minds, one should single-pointedly cultivate faith [in his good qualities]. If I elaborated on the nature of these [good qualities] in terms of their [detailed] characteristics, there would be too much [to say]; I have depicted only a little, from the perspective of the essential topic, of [how] he entered into [a state of] profound realization.

The actuality of all the Buddhas who have perfected renunciation and realization;

The source for all the gateways of Bön in the three sections [of teaching];

[And] Heruka, the sovereign of infinite *maṇḍalas*,

Are perfected as the body, speech and mind of the venerable lama.

If he performs the dance of utterly wide-open wisdom,

[In] a way in which the brilliance of the good qualities and activities
of his three secrets [of body, speech and mind]

could not be conceived as internal, external or other,
He would cross far beyond the bounds of space.

These words have been composed in verse at a moment of interlude.

* * *

The third topic [of three]: A brief conclusion with a description of what occurred after his passing. In Sūtra it says: "Because he was permanently disenchanted with desires, one time he showed how to pass beyond suffering." In such a manner did [Shardza], relying on his final deed in this realm, act for the welfare of other living beings in the way he passed beyond suffering. [97] There are two [topics concerning] how he did so upon which I will briefly elaborate: 1) how he performed deeds after his passing; and 2) how yet again he reflected upon the welfare of others.

Regarding the first:

Just as in his previous aspirations,
In this realm of the difficult to train
He expanded the welfare of the teaching and living beings
for about seventy [years].
In order to tame many beings via the way of nirvāṇa
He demonstrated the final deed,
And to him, I pray.

This supreme, holy guide of ours acted for the welfare of his disciples in this world through enlightened activity that is unrivaled by anyone at all who holds the doctrine in

these degenerate times. He fulfilled for a time the aims of disciples in corporeal bodies, and at that time he looked to engage in enlightened activity in other realms for a greater purpose. Thus he showed how to dissolve the physical body into the expanse.

To expand on that, [beginning] from the time he was seventy-five years old, in the female water-bird year: on the previous occasions in which he had given Bön instruction, he had always been one to give guidance and hold various discussions at the time; gradually, [however] from that [time onward], all clinging to ordinary perceptions of this worldly life collapsed into its own natural state, such that he acted casually, neither looking after nor not looking after his food and clothing, and he delighted in playing with children. [98] His outward manifestation (*snang ba*) everywhere exhibited itself as an aimless, uninhibited drama. On such occasions, some disciples vividly encountered many divine forms in the lama's body. His attendant actually saw that [Shardza] traveled without his feet touching the ground, put his bowl down in midair, and did not [cast] a shadow in the [light of] a butter lamp. Afterwards, [the lama] said, "I, Shardzapa, am an old man, and I do not know when I will die." Then he gave the following personal advice to his students: "For nearly eight years, I have been [exclusively] training students through the Bön instructions; don't waste these teachings. The interpretation should be kept straight, and the practice should be taken up. Make a safe place [in yourselves] for your experience and realization. This meeting with the teachings of the Practice Lineage, the ultimate truth, is fortunate, isn't it? Do you understand?"

In the wood-dog year, when he was seventy-six, a student of his, Kelzang Yungdrung, wanted to perform a Mendrub (*sman sgrub*) [ceremony]. [Shardza] said, "If you do not hold it within the fourth month, we will not gather together." Having

completed the Mendrub, on the second day of the fourth month, [Shardza] said, "Now I am going to an uninhabited place." He went to a mountainside called Rapzhiteng,³¹⁴ and he stayed there. To his disciples he gave advice in earnest, saying, "the foundation of all good qualities is the vows and the commitments, so have faith in yourselves." [99] While doing so, he remained present with his gaze continually fixed [in space]. On the thirteenth day, while performing an elaborate feast offering for Tsewang Böyulma, he sang many adamantine songs [of realization] (*yungdrung gi mgur*). He sewed up the door of a small tent [in which he stayed] and ordered [his disciples] not to open the door. Uttering many auspicious words of truth such as "Mutsuk Marro,"³¹⁵ he remained continually in the five-point [meditation posture]. The next day, many great and small linked spheres of rainbow light and many kinds of horizontal and vertical ones shone above his tent. At night there were [many] rainbow lights, [including] an especially clear white light that was like a [white] woolen cloth appearing alone. After three days the ground shook and there was a loud noise and a gentle rain of flowers fell. After the fourth day variegated light emanated through the seams of the tent; the five different rainbow colors were vividly enveloping [each other] and arising like boiling misty vapor.

Then, a genuine and holy disciple, Tsultrim Wangchuk—the best of all the practitioners—said, "If we leave [the master's] body for a long time now, there is the danger that there will be no remains at all as a support for our faith and our prayers in the future." Hurrying to meet [the master's] holy remains, he opened the door of the small

314 rab zhi steng.

315 mu tshug smar ro. Equivalent to the Tibetan bkra shis bzang po, the phrase literally means "good luck" in the Zhangzhung language.

tent and prostrated himself. He saw that the remains were enveloped in light and that they were elevated about one cubit in midair. [100] He drew near to the presence [of his master]. Most of the nails of [the master's] hands and feet were strewn upon his seat. The body remained. It had transformed to about the size of a one-year-old child, and the heart was warm. Then the magnificent [disciple] Tsul[trim] Wang[chuk] dressed the precious body in the regalia of the Enjoyment Body.

For forty-nine days, he made vast offerings including the feast offerings from the authoritative texts like the Yungdrung Longgyé; the trio of Gya, Bö and Dren; the Ladrub Döchung Rinchen; and the Dedü Tsasum.³¹⁶ In connection with these vast offerings he received the four empowerments, and he uttered elegant and efficacious kinds of prayers reminding [his master] of his aspirations. On that occasion, spiritual experiences and realizations splendidly arose in [Shardza's] older and more recent disciples and followers. Amazing signs abundantly appeared every day, including rainbow light and a rain of flowers; thus, the local people were fixed in a state of tremendous faith. A few people who felt indifferently [about him] remarked that "based on the signs and symbols we have seen, compared with when he stayed at home, the lama's passing away is really impressive."

After that, [Shardza's] inner circle—including his nephew, from the monastic seat of the magnificent [lama], the holy Lodrö Gyatso³¹⁷ and his younger brother, Tsultrim

316 yung drung klong rgyas; rgya bod dran gsum; bla sgrub 'dod 'byung rin chen; bde 'dus rtsa gsum.

317 blo gros rgya mtsho.

Tenzin,³¹⁸ who was extremely wise in both the spiritual and secular domains—made offerings in the sacred places and to all the lamas and monasteries in Kham, Ü, and Tsang in general, and to the individual lamas and monasteries in the surrounding regions, so that they might fulfill the intentions of the deceased. [101] They offered a great quantity of resources such as [is customary in ritually] making donations and in the Mangché³¹⁹ [ceremony performed on behalf of the dead]. In [Shardza's] own place, Tengchen Dongak Yungdrung Tengyé Ling,³²⁰ the monastery along with all its affiliated branches made arrangements for the annual contribution of a substantial number of measures of Chinese silver coin for the employment of an assembly of five hundred monks. They inaugurated an annual great feast offering in connection with the [smaller] prayer service of the seven day Rildrub³²¹ [ceremony] that is based upon the rites in the *Dedü Tsasum*. In doing so, they enormously increased the two accumulations [of merit and wisdom] for the minds of themselves and others, and they developed a tremendous method for completing the path that did not distort the radiant light of [the master's] intentions.

Later, they engaged in the ritual construction of a reliquary (Skt. *stupa*) of exceptional quality out of his [smaller] gold and copper funerary vessel [in the architectural style of] the 'well-arranged *yungdrung*', according to the [instructions for] inserting efficacious formulas (Skt. *dhāraṇī*) described by His Holiness [the former Menri Abbot] Nyima [Tenzin]. The precious remains were [ritually] invited and requested to abide [in the reliquary], and people also reported in the future that from time to time light flared up

318 tshul khrims bstan 'dzin.

319 mang 'kyed. literally, 'delighting many'.

320 steng chen dgon mdo sngags g.yung drung bstan rgyas gling.

321 ril sgrub.

and rainbow colors emanated [from it]. Actions pleasing to the lama were performed after [his passing], illustrated by the continual lighting of butter lamps before his remains and by the daily fivefold [offerings]; even the sequences [of these actions] were carried out in harmony with Bön, without hindrance, fully and totally. So it was that auspicious goodness was accomplished.

The second [topic, how yet again he reflected upon the welfare of others]: [102]

Unmoving further from the inner radiant expanse,
 He was ensconced in an illusory body of wisdom-unity;
 The infinite sun who emanates to train whoever [is in need],
 I pray to him who rises for as long as *saṃsāra* endures.

In such a way did the magnificent, noble lama himself, solidifying into a physical bodily expression for a time, remain in equipoise within the great radiant light of reality's inner expanse. From that [state] he furthermore settled in an illusory Great Seal body from out of the dynamic potential of the wisdom-unity. Wandering in realms of the Enjoyment Body, he purified this dynamic energy. From there, through boundless expressions emanating in whatever way is appropriate to train beings [and] for the sake of individual disciples, he furthered the welfare of the teachings and living beings in respective pure and impure worlds. Until such time as cyclic existence is empty, he has acted, acts [now] and will [continue to] act through boundless expressions of everlasting, all-encompassing and spontaneously-present activity for the tremendous benefit for the world in general and for this and that disciple and worthy vessel [in particular], wherever they might be. Thus he manifested in the auspicious form of one who enjoys the glorious

qualities of spiritual welfare and happiness at all times as he pleases, and he became all-pervasive everywhere.

For the supreme guide who has mastered the Ten Powers,
 There was no chance for injury in battle with the Lord of Death,
 Yet the water vessel of disciples' merit was broken, [103]
 And he showed the way the shining moon
 of his bodily form in this life
 sets.

Yet still, through the marvelous power of his aspirations and prayers,
 Which were even greater than those of all the Victorious Ones,
 Like the miraculous good fortune
 of compassion without reference point,
 He manifested back [in this world]
 To work for as long as *samsāra* endures.

These words I have arranged in verse in a moment of interlude.

* * *

Just so,
 By the power of respectful supplication,
 In all of his previous life up to now,
 He has accepted followers with undistracted compassion.
 Even so,
 May we be infused with the blessings of his three secrets,
 [His body, speech and mind].

Without ever being separated from the essential teachings
 Of the general vehicles and especially
 Secret [Mantra] and Mind [Discernment],
 He perfected the two Stages [of Creation and Completion]
 And realized the Natural State.
 May we spontaneously perfect the dual welfare
 Of self and others.

He propagated and spread the Victorious One's teaching
 And held it firmly for a hundred eons as a human being.
 Without even the name of the declining world being heard, [104]
 May he fully encompass the three realms
 With the wealth of the Perfect Age (Skt. *kṛtayuga*).

The meaning of these three verses will not be expanded upon at length considering that they are easy to understand. To speak yet again:

On the golden throne of the precious kingdom raised up by the Bön of
 Mushen Tönpa,
 As the supreme protector of the teachings and beings in the degenerate age,
 He was unanimously installed with wondrous, auspicious songs,
 by those who had mastered the Ten Powers;
 The genuine teacher from Shardza, the jeweled blue lotuses
 of whose feet became the crown jewel of all beings in their entirety.

When those who held the wealth of the Bön teaching
 Sank into the ocean of the Age of Strife (Skt. *kaliyuga*),
 Through the courage of the supreme enlightened motivation
 That expands in the ten directions,
 He developed ever greater the activity of lifting them higher;

The flowers of praise from the great heroes showered down [upon him].

With the mind of the Victorious Ones that loves living beings,
 He perfectly appeared in the form of the immutable (*g.yung drung*) master,
 And so controlled the treasury of the sacred life,
 Which is like all the myriad good qualities of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*
 Compressed into one.

By the descent of the white light
 Of a tiny fraction of his wondrous deeds,
 [Disciples who are like] night lilies of blossoming faith,
 If they will be freely arranged,
 They will be deeply and vastly liberated.
 There is no need to describe the glory of the perfect full moon.

An abridged summary of the amazing life story,
 Of the learned and accomplished lord of Bön,
 Who is thoroughly praised by the Victorious One,
 I have prepared in essence,
 Concise and clear. [105]
 What is narrated herein I have composed
 So that wise followers will open the door
 of their throats [and speak of it].

Even just his name bestows the highest liberation
 And hearing and remembering it fulfills all virtuous wishes;
 Even just this brief account I have given
 So that his true words are verified
 Is heavy with wholesome fruit.

Illustrated by the pure, virtuous deeds arising from [this brief story],

All of the myriad good deeds I have done
 For self and others in the three times,
 I dedicate so that all living beings without exception
 May cross over the ocean of existence
 And attain the exalted state of complete omniscience.

The Venerable Lama in all of his births
 Served [his masters] always and continuously
 Through the three kinds of pleasing actions.
 Upholding the treasury of his speech,
 Understanding the wisdom-essence of his mind,
 May we completely and perfectly accomplish
 The enlightened actions of a spiritual way of life.

From the great clouds of the Perfect Age,
 The blessing of his three secrets,
 A rain of precious jewels of well-being and joy
 Perpetually fell.
 And so all good things were granted,
 Fulfilling all wishes, both fleeting and ultimate.
 May the goodness of the magnificent and noble lama,
 The all-pervasive master,
 Be our sustenance.

As for this abridged biography of the presiding master, the venerable lord and holy lama: When I was composing the verses as a short supplication to sustain my own faith, many assemblies of the faithful in the area and, in particular, the holy nephew of the lord [Shardza], Lodrö Gyatso, again and again urged me [to write the biography] with the flute of their [beautiful] voices. [106] More recently, he who has come [to represent] the

great Yangtön family lineage, the yogin of the snowy mountains, Tenzin Gyaltsen, and the holy nephew in the Khyung [clan], Yungdrung Dūdul, reminded me [to do so] many times.³²² In response to their requests, the one who is [like] the younger brother of [Shardza], who was born in the family of Köpung [Drenpa Namkha], a Noble [monk] of [Tönpa] Shen[rap] called by the name of Ngawang Kelzang Tenpé Gyaltsen,³²³ knowing the good qualities of the magnificent lama, acquiesced. Based upon the intention to do so, [the biography] was composed with reverence in a naturally abiding sacred place, the site of the meditation community [known as] Sangwa Yangdzong.³²⁴ May it be virtuous! May it be auspicious!

* * *

Homage to the guru.

In the great royal domain of thought that is wholly good from the very beginning

He even had the power to command the unruly ones of the degenerate age.

To truly dedicate himself to the magnificence of the Supreme Vehicle,

The one from Shardza arose in a body of magical wisdom.

Where his love for the doctrine and living beings is at work,

The miracles of his transformations are beyond the limit of expression.

Whatever appears to the perception of those with ordinary interest,

Is how his life's accomplishments have been described,

Free from hyperbole and underestimation.

322 yang ston chen po'i gdung son rnal 'byor gangs ri ba bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan; khyung dbon dam pa g.yung drung bdud 'dul.

323 ngag dbang skal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan.

324 gsang ba yang rdzong gi sgrub sde.

The story that he attained the rainbow body
 Is truly like the narration of the expansive good deeds
 Of the Victorious Ones throughout space and time. [107]
 The great, learned and mighty heart-son of the holy one
 Has made this [story] nectar for the ears
 For individuals of good fortune.

Therefore his aspirations for the doctrine and living beings
 were like the continuity of running water;
 The white wave—the four means of attracting followers—
 did not pass away over time.
 By his successor, that deep ocean Lodrö Gyatsho,
 The gift of Bön, a great sea of publications, was printed.
 This is wonderful.

The virtue of that [activity]
 Is the miracle of the Great Transformation,³²⁵
 Transmuting the rigidity of living beings' minds
 Into the finest gold.
 May this presentation of the Great Perfection's three sections³²⁶
 Flourish and grow for as long as the eon endures.

325 'pho chen. This term refers to the transference of consciousness at the time of death, or in the intermediate state, and is linked in Dzokchen with the rainbow body ('ja' lus).

326 sde gsum. This seems to allude to the three traditional Bön Dzokchen lineages, comprised of a khrid, snyan brgyud and rdzogs chen.

This brief publisher's inscription has been especially composed at the behest of the Well-born Precious Successor [Lodrö Gyatso] by Monsé Namkha Drakpa.³²⁷ May it be virtuous!

³²⁷ smon sras nam mkha' grags pa.

CRITICAL EDITION:

A Transliteration and Analysis of Two Tibetan Texts

The following represents a Wylie transliteration of two available texts on the abridged version of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen's biography. C represents a typeset edition produced in Chengdu in 1988; it was published by Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang and distributed by Si khron Zhing chen Zhin hwa dpe tshong khang under ISBN 7540901810. It also includes a short preface on the biographer, absent from the other text, reproduced below. T1 represents a 72-folio, xylographic edition obtained from the current Menri abbot's residence in Dolanji, H.P., India. It corresponds precisely in length to the text printed in 1985 by Trinley Jamtsho in Dehra Dun, U.P., India, a version which reportedly has been "reproduced from a set of clear prints from the Shardza hermitage (*shar rdza ri khrod*) blocks." While I have not surveyed Trinley Jamtsho's edition for this project, it appears to have derived from the same woodblocks as T1. Indeed, it is possible that the Menri edition was made available for the Indian reproduction, though I did not investigate this matter.

The transliterated Tibetan which follows represents my best reading of the two editions described above. All variations are indicated by footnotes, with the more likely of the two readings in the main body and the less likely preserved in the footnotes. Terms in bold represent variants that appear equally acceptable, pending further investigation. The vast majority of these make no difference at all to the translation, but typically hinge on, for example, whether the correct form of a verb in the past tense contains a secondary 'sa' suffix or not. If readily available resources (such as the bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo's verb charts) did not provide an answer, I have left such points unresolved. I hope this edition will

provide specialist readers with the opportunity to check the Tibetan for themselves at any point in my translation. The page numbers presented amidst the preceeding English rendering correspond to the Chengdu edition, here abbreviated as [C:1] as opposed to [1].

Preface: A Brief History of the Author

[C:1] rtsom pa po'i lo rgyus mdor bsdus/

su la bskal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1897-1959) mchog ni dpal rigs khod bo'i gdung brgyud yab o rgyan rig 'dzin dang/ yum tshe ring dpang mo zhes pa'i sras su/ rab byung bco lng pa'i me gya lor sku 'khrungs/ chung dus nas rus kyi dhu dbon mdo rgyud grags pa'i mdun yi ge 'bri klog sogs slob sbyong mdzad de tshegs¹ med du mkhyen zhing thugs rig bzang ba'i rtser son/ glag brag rjong dgon du mkhan po bsod nams chos 'grub kyi mdun du ban de'i gzhung lugs skor gsan nas mkhas pa'i snyan pas phyogs kun khyab/ 'khrul zhig padma² bdud 'dul yab sras kyi gdan sa klu mo rab du phebs nas gzhung lugs thos bsam gyis sgro 'dogs bcod/ drang srong tshul khrims mchog rgyal mdun du bsnyen par rdzogs te nyes ltung gi gri mas ma gos pa ngur smrig 'dzin pa'i srog shing du gyur/ rigs kyi bdag po dbal khyung gter ston bstan gnyis gsang sngags bling pa spyi bor bsten cing/

[C:2] rje nyid kyis khong rtza ba'i chos bdag tu mnga' gsol/ mkhas pa'i dbang phyugs hor grag dkar rin po che sogs ris med kyi bla ma dam pa du ma bsten nas thugs rgyud yon tan gyis bkang zhing mkhas btsun bzang po'i rnam thar la bsnyegs/ khyad par grub dbang 'ja' lus pa shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan rin po che mnyes pa gsum gyi sgo nas rtza ba'i bla mar bsten/ 'phrul ngag g.yung drung bon gyi ring lugs mdo rgyud gyi gzhung bshad/ rdzogs chen gyi man ngag bka' lung dbang khrid lhag lus med pa bum pa gang byos kyi tshul du gsan te

1 *Orig.* tsheg.

2 *Orig.* pamnga.

thugs zin gyi slob ma'i mchog tu gyur/ shar rdza³ rin po che'i sgrub brgyud kyi bstan pa mi
 nyams gong 'phel ched 'chad rtsom gyi mdzad pa lhur bzhes kyis nyag shod du sgrub gnas
 byang chub gling du g.yung drung bon kyi bshad sgrub ki sde btsugs te/ khyung po dang a
 mdo rgya rong sogs phyogs kyi skal ldan slob ma rnams me tog la bung ba 'khor bzhin 'dus te
 phyi nang gi rig pa'i gnas la sgro 'dogs chod pa'i mkhas btsun dam pa mang du byung ste
 gshen bstan gsos su gyur/ sum rtags dang snyan ngag[/] rtsis dang sman sbyor/ 'di phyi gros
 'debs kyi mgur glu/ lugs gnyis bstan bcos/ 'dzam gling yul bshad/

[C:3] dris lan skabs lnga dang/ grub mtha'i rnam dbye/ bstan gnyis dgongs pa gcig dril/
 dam pa gsum gyi bshad khrid sogs gsung rtsom pod lnga lhag tsam bzhugs pa sngon mar
 phal cher par du 'khod kyang da lta dpe rgyun tsam du lus/ mdor na phyi 'dul sde'i khrims la
 nyes ltung gi dri ma dben pa/ nang mdo sde'i dgongs pas thugs rgyud byang sems 'byongs pa/
 gsang ba rgyud sde'i bskyed rdzogs dpe thog tu ma lus par sgo gsum gnad la gcun pa/ yang
 gsang rdzogs chen gyi lta ba yid dpyod du ma song ba man ngag gnad du grol ba ste/ sku tshe
 hril por rnam g.yeng sos dal du skad cig kyang mi bzhugs par 'chad nyan sgom sgrub kyis
 dus 'da' par mdzad/

mthar dgung lo drug cu rtsa gsum bzhes pa sa phag lor gzhi snang sku yi bkod pa gzhi
 dbyings su bsdu pa'i tshul bstan pa mdzad do//

slob bu a g.yung gshen bstan mtha' rgyas su 'bod pas sug bris su bgyis pao/

3 *Orig.* dza.

The Life-Story of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen

[T1:1a] rje btsun bla ma rgyal dbang shar rdza ba chen po bkra shis rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rtogs brjod nyung gsal du gleng ba ngo mtshar dpag bsam ljon pa'i dga' tshal zhes bya ba bzhugs so⁴//

[T1:1b; C:1] rnam pa kun kyi mchog ldan stong pa nyid/ 'gyur med bde chen ngang las zung 'jug gar/

[T1:2a; C:2] srid dang zhi ba'i khams su rnam rol ba/ rigs bdag od dkar gnas 'dzin des skyongs zhig/

[T1:2b; C:3] dus gsum rgyal ba'i gsang ba gsum gyi ye shes sgyu 'phrul dra ba'i dngos// snyigs dus ngur smrig gar gyis rnam rol theg mchog dge ba'i bshes kyi tshul// yongs rdzogs bstan pa'i shing rta la brten gdul bya'i khams la dbang bsgyur ba// rgyal ba gnyis pa shar rdza'i ston pa mangga wer zhi'i zhabs la 'dud// grangs med gong nas tshogs gnyis chu gter bsrubs pa'i 'bras// snyings ma'i 'gro la rjes su brtse ba'i rta bdun gyis// bstan 'gro'i mkha' la lham mer drangs pa'i phrin las od// lha dang bcas pa'i skye dgu yongs kyi gtsug na mdzes//

[C:4] gang gi yon tan zab cing rgya che ba// lbo dman bdag 'dra'i spyod yul ma yin kyang// rlobs⁵ chen mdzad pa'i rtogs brdzod cha shas tsam// dad pa'i gsos su spel la su zhig gshung// de phyir ngo mtshar rnam thar utpala⁶ tshogs⁷// mdor bsdus gtam gyi sradd bu la brgyus te// tshig don spel legs bsdebs ba'i phreng mdzes 'di// [T1:3a] rang gzhan spyi bo'i rgyan du spyin gyis longs//

⁴ T1 omits *so*.

⁵ T1 has *rlab ma*.

⁶ C has *apngala*.

⁷ C has **tshigs**.

'dir bdag cag gi dpal ldan bla madam pa rigs dang dkyil 'khor kun gyi khyab bdag/ nges
 pa don gyi g.yung drung 'chang dbang chen po rje btsun bla ma shar rdza ba bkra shis rgyal
 mtshan dpal bzang po zhes yongs su grags pa gang zhig/ snyigs ma'i dus 'dir bsam bzhin du
 sum ldan ngur smrig 'dzin pa'i skur bstan te 'phrul ngag bstan pa'i nyin byed phyogs brgyar
 bdal nas gdul bya rnam sdyongs bar mdzad pa 'di nyid kyi rnam par thar pa'i rtogs brjod
 mdor bstus nas go bde ba'i dbang du byas te/ sdom tshig gi tshoms su bsdus pa'i rnam thar
 gsol 'debs padma dkar po'i phreng ba zhes sngar nas bkod zin pa de nyid rtsa bar bzung nas
 te'i don 'grel gyi tshul du don gyi yin lugs sgro skur dang bral bar cung zad bstan pa la gnyis/

[C:5] yon tan mthong ba'i ched du rnam thar brjod pa/ dgos ched 'grub pa'i ched du 'dod
 don la smon pao/ [T1:3b] dang bo la gsum ste/ sprul gzhi'i sgo nas rnam thar mdor bstan pa/
 sku⁸ tshe 'di nyid kyi rtogs brjod rgyas par bshad pa/ gshegs rjes kyi byung pa brjod pas mjug
 bsdu bao/

dang po ni/ rje btsun bla ma dam pa 'di ni/ ring nas byang chub mchog tu thugs bskyed
 cing tshogs bsags shing sgrib pa sbyangs te sangs rgyas kyi go 'phang mngon du mdzad nas
 gdul bya'i don du gang la gang 'dul gyi phrin las spel ba la mnga'⁹ dbang 'byor pa'i bdag nyid
 can du bzhugs pa ste/ de'i tshul la gnyis/ gdod ma'i dbyings su mnon par byang chub pa'i
 tshul/ de las sprul pas 'dro ba 'dul ba'i tshul lo/ dang po ni/

ye nas rnam dag kun khyab rig pa'i gshis// rang bzhin od gsal bde chen ye shes rtsal//
 gang 'dul rnam rol mtha' yas 'byung ba'i gnas// sku gsum ngo bo bla mar gsol ba 'debs//

⁸ C has ski.

⁹ T1 has mda'

zhes smos te/ [T1:4a] rje bstun dam pa 'di ni nges pa'i don du gzhi gdod ma'i dbying su
rig pa'i ye shes bzung 'dzin gyi 'ching pa las grol zhing spang rtogs kyi yon tan thams cad
mthar phyin nas khyab bdag gdod ma'i mgon po dang gnyis su med par byang chub ching/

[C:6] sku dang ye shes 'du 'bral med pa'i ngang la dus gsum rgyal ba thams cad dang
dgongs pa ro gcig tu bzhugs pas na sku dang zhing khams rgya mthso'i bkod pa sna tshogs
dang gang la gang 'dul gyi phrin las mtha' yas par spro ba'i 'byung gnas su gyur pa yin te/
rgyud las rang bzhin ye sang rgyas pa'i sku 'di ni/ dag pa chen po yang dag bla na med/ gcig
la gsum gyi bdag nyid chen po ste/ phrin las bsam yas 'gyed pa'i stobs mnga' 'o/ zhe gsungs
pa bzhin no/ gnyis pa ni/

bskal mang gong nas 'gro la rjes brtse bas// grub pa rig 'dzin sems dpa'i tshul la sogs// du
ma'i zlos gar nyer bzung phrin las can// [T1:4b] dam pa'i skyes rabs brgyud la gsol ba 'debs//

zhes smos te/ gzhi dbying bon sku'i ngang nyid las g.yo pa med kyang bzhi snang ye shes
kyi mkhyen cha nang du gsal ba'i rang gdangs las longs sku'i nam rol thugs rje'i ston pa
gshen lha od dkar gyi sku ru bzhengs nas thun mong min pa'i gdul bya nams kyi don mdzad
cing/

[C:7] de las thun mong gi 'gro ba nams kyi don du/ mdo las/ thabs dang thugs rje la brten
nas/ 'gro ba'i don du cir yang snang// zhes pa ltar gdul bya'i mos pa dang mthun par sang
rgyas dang sems dpa'i thsul sogs gang la gang 'dul gyi bkod pa spyi dang/ dag ma dag gi skye
ba'i srid pa mtha' yas pa bzung nas gdul bya'i don mdzad pas na de'i thsul bsam gyis mi
khyab pas mtha' gcig tu kha tshon mi chod kyang/ re zhig gdul bya phyogs re ba'i mthong
tshul dang sbyar te/ bter 'byin grub pa'i dbang po gar dbang gsang sngags bling pa'i zhal sng

nas ye shes kyi gzigs pas ji ltar gzigs pa'i ton bzhin cung zad bstan na/ [T1:5a] 'phrul ngag bon kyi 'byung gnas byang shambhala¹⁰ 'ol mo'i gling du bdag cag gi ston pa 'dren mchog gshen rab mi bo'i spyen snar g.yung drung sems dpa' chen po dag pa drang srong gi tshul la gnas shing dgra bcom pa stong dang lnga brgya'i dbus na yon tan¹¹ gyis mngon par mtho ba'i 'pags pa dga' ba 'dzin zhes bya ba gnas brtan¹² chen po bcu drug gi nang tshan shar lus 'phags gling na da dung yang bzhugs te bstan pa skyong ba¹³ dang/ rgyal ba'i gdung sob mu cho ldem drug gi mdun du zhi dul drang srong gi brtul zhugs la legs par gnas nas dgra bcom sum stong drug brya'i tshogs dpon du gyur pa'i sems dpa' g.yung drung dpal mchog ces 'pod pa rgya nag o mi shan du byon nas bstan pa spel ba dang/

[C:8] rgya gar gyi yul du bcom ldan 'das shaakya thub pa'i zhabs drung du byang sems nyan thos kyi tshul bzung ba'i dge slong kun la dpag med ces grags pa sbyangs pa'i yon tan la¹⁴ gnas shing yangs pa'i grong khyer¹⁵ 'dul ba dang/ [T1:5b] gangs can gyi ljongs su 'chi med rgyal ba yab sras kyi rjes su bzung zhing lo chen mkhas pa mi bzhi'i nang tshan du gyur pa grub dbang sha ri u chen¹⁶ nam dpal ldan gsang chen du 'bod pa bod yul mkhas grub bye ba'i gtsug rgyan du gyur pa dang/ sman lung bye thang tu nges pa don gyi rnal 'byor kyi dbang phyug sprul pa'i gter ston chen po bzhad ston dngos grub grags pa zhes yongs su grags pa rdzogs chen yang rtse theg pa'i bka' gsang mdzod 'dzin pa dang/ dbus phyogs su mkha' 'gro dkar mo spyen gcig gis rjes su bzung nas snyan brgyud gdams pa'i bdud rtsi 'chang ba

¹⁰ C has shambha la and inserts a '/' punctuation marker here.

¹¹ T1 has mon tan.

¹² T1 has gnas brten.

¹³ C has skyong pa.

¹⁴ C omits la.

¹⁵ T1 has grod khyer.

¹⁶ T1 and C both have ṽr_ u chen, but NBT (expanded version) and other sources give sha ri u chen for this individual.

mar ston rgyal legs sam sman gong ba kun bzang 'gro ba'i mgon po zhes 'bod pa byang chub
kyi sems tshul bzhin 'byong zhing grub gnyis kyi gzi byin mgon par mtho ba dang/ rgyal mo
rong du rdzogs chen bla med kyi snyan brgyud 'dzin pa rdza bo grub chen shes rab g.yung
drung grags pa'm rig pa rang shar zhes grags pa nges don snying po'i lam nas gdod ma'i grub
mtha' tshe 'di nyid nas snyogs pa'i rnal 'byor ba chen po dang/

[T1:6a; C:9] rgya rong gi gnas su khro chen gyi gdung las byon pa'i mchog gi dngos grub
brnyes pa grub dbang a tog dkar po¹⁷ zhes 'bod pa mtha' 'khob kyi yul du bstan pa'i ba dan
'deg pa'i bka' drin mtshungs pa med pa dang/ sog po'i yul du nyams dang rtogs pa'i klong
rdol **pa'i**¹⁸ sbas pa'i rnal 'byor pa smon lam rin chen zhes mtshan du grags pa kun spang sems
dpa' chen po'i brtul zhugs la gnas nas 'brel tshad don ldan gyi phrin las skyongs pa'i bdag
nyid du gyur pa ste/ de dag ni skyes tshogs las byung ba ldar yin la/ de dag so so'i rnam thar
mjal na 'dzam gling gi 'dren pa phal mo che thams cad kyi skyes rabs su 'brel ba ltar snang
bas rnam grangs so so ba'i dbye pa thams cad ni sus kyang brjod nus pa ma yin no/ [T1:6b]
gzhan yang gsang ba nges pa'i dbang du byas na/ phrom gshen chen po gser thog lce 'byams
kyis byin gyis brlabs shing/ bla chen dran pa'i mchog gi sprul par nges pa yin te/ 'og tu 'chad
'gyur ltar g.yung drung gi lung gis nges pa'i phyir dang/ 'gro ba'i mgon po tshe dbang rig 'dzin
kyi rnam rol du'ang nges pa yin te/

[C:10] gter chen bde chen gling pa'i lung nas rje tshe dbang rig 'dzin rigs bdag tu bstan pa
dang/ rtsa gsum gyi bka' babs kyi lo rgyus skabs su rje tshe dbang gi rnam rol tu bzhag kyang
mi 'gal zhes rje bla ma rang nyid kyis rang la dngos su gsungs pa mnon sum tshad ma ste/ de
dag gis gtul dka'i don mdzad pa'i rnam rol ni shin tu'ang rya che ba yin no/ 'o na dran pa dang

¹⁷ C has a tog dkar bo

¹⁸ T1 has klong rdol **ba'i**.

tshe dbang yab sras rgyud gcig pa'i skye rgyud du 'dod pa mi 'gal lam snyam na/ ji skad du/ sku gsung¹⁹ thugs tshul dran pa yab sras gsum/ zhes sogs gsungs pa ltar/²⁰ rgyal ba rnams ngo bo'i dbyings su ro gcig pas so sor dgye ba med la/ [T1: 7a] snang tshul gyi cha nas thugs rje'i dbang gis ye shes kyi rnam rol **bye ba**²¹ phrag brgya la sogs par²² mos pa dang mtshams par ston pas gcig tha dad rang rgyud pa ltar ma nges pas/ gang ltar byas kyang mi 'gal ba'i don gyis 'phags pa'i rnam thar bsam gyis mi khab pa'i tshul la yid ches par bya'o/ de ltar gdul bya'i khams su sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa spel zhing gdul bya rnams thar pa dang thams cad mkhen pa'i go 'pang la dbugs 'gyin mdzad pa'i skyes rabs kyi phreng ba mtha' yas par bstan nas mkhyen brtse nus pa'i yon tan gyi gzi 'od dang mkhas dang grub pa'i²³ phrin las kyi snang bas sa'i phyogs ma lus pa khyab par mdzad pa yin no/

gdod ma'i gshis kyi gnas lugs de bzhin nyid// spros bral zhi ba'i dbyings su byang chub nas// 'pho 'gyur spros pa'i yul las ring song yang// ye shes sgyu ma'i rnam rol bsam mi khyab// [T1:7b] rmad byung thugs bskyed ri dbang lhun po'i ngos// gang 'dul sprul pa'i nyi zla'i rgyan bkod nas// 'gro khams gling bzhi'i mun pa sel mdzad pa'i// phrin las 'od snang yid can gsos su smin//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

gnyis pa sku tshe 'di nyid kyi rtogs brjod rgyas par bsad pa la gnyis/ rang bzhin brjod pas mdor bstan pa/ rnam grangs so sor rgyas par bsad pa'o/ dang po ni/

¹⁹ C has gsang.

²⁰ C omits /.

²¹ T1 has **bye pa**.

²² C has ma sogs par.

²³ T1 has grub ba'i.

dus gsum rgyal ba'i mkhyen brtse nus pa'i gter// gcig bsdus sum ldan ngur smrig 'dzin pa'i tshul// snyigs ma'i dus kyi gshen bstan mdzes pa'i rgyan// mangga wer zhi'i shabs la gsol ba 'debs//

[C:12] zhes smos te/ te las skabs 'dir 'gro ba lha dang bcas pa'i ma 'dres pa'i mdza' bshes/ mdo sngags ris med kyi gshen bstan rgya mtsho gsal ba'i nyin byed/ sras bcas rnam 'dren yongs kyi ye shes sgyu ma'i²⁴ sku can/ [T1:8a] sa'i phyogs kun tu mtshan snyan gyi ba dan cir yang g.yo ba²⁵ rje btshun bla ma g.yung drung 'chang dbang chen po 'di ni/ rgyal ba²⁶ thams cad kyi gsang ba'i mdzod la mnga' brnyes pas shes bya ji lta ba²⁷ dang ji snyed pa'i gnas snang gi rang bzhin ma 'dres par mngon sum du mkhyen pa'i ye shes mnga' zhing/ bstan 'dro'i don la phyogs su ma lhung zhing ris su ma chad pa'i brtse ba'i thugs rje dang ldan pa/ bdud dang bdud kyi rtsa lag tu gyur pa'i sde thams cad zil gyis gnong pa'i nus pa'i phrin las kyi rtsal yongs su rdzogs pa'i bdag nyid du bzhugs pas/ dus 'dir bstan pa yongs rdzogs la brten nas gdul bya skyongs pa'i ched du theg mchog dge ba'i bshes gnyen gyi rnam par bzhengs te/ phyi ltar so thar gyi sdom pas sku btsun zhing/ nang ltar byang sems kyi sdom pas thugs rgyud dul ba/ gsang ba ltar gsang sngags kyi sdom pas lta dgongs kyi gdengs dang ldan pa ste/ [T1:8b] sum ldan ngur smrig 'dzin pa'i skur bstan nas/ snyigs ma'i dus 'dir ring lam mtshan nyid theg pa mdo dang/ nye lam thabs kyi theg pa gsang sngags dang/

[C:13] myur lam bla med gyi theg pa rdzogs pa chen po ste rgyal bstan ris su ma chad pa yongs su rdzogs pa'i gshen bstan rin po che'i rgyal mtshan chen po spangs rtogs dang phrin las rmad du byung ba'i dpung pa la brten nas srid rtser yongs su sgrenge bar mdzad nas dus

²⁴ C has skyu ma'i.

²⁵ C has g.yo pa.

²⁶ C has rgyal.

²⁷ C has ji lta pa.

kyi mtha 'dir yang 'phrul ngag gshen gyi bstan pa la ston pa gnyis pa lta bu'i phrin las spel
 zhing/ 'brel tshad don dang ldan pa'i thabs mkhas kyi bya ba sna tshogs kyis gdul bya rnams
 dngos dang brgyud nas thar pa dang thams cad mkhyen pa'i go 'phang la sbyor ba'i dpyid
 dpal du snang bas bka' drin dang thugs rje 'dren pa gzhan las kyang bla lhag tu che ba yin no/
 gnyis pa nam grangs so sor rgyas par smos pa la gnyis/ tshad ma'i lung gis bstan tshul/
 [T1:9a] lung bzhin 'gro ba'i don du byon tshul lo/ dang po ni/

gangs can nyin mor byed pa'i 'dren pa zhig// phyi dus mdo khams shar nas 'char ro zhes//
 bslu med²⁸ lung gi skya renga²⁹ phrin pa yis// lha mi yid ches skyed la gsol ba 'debs//

zhes smos te/ bdag cag gi 'dren pa mtshungs med thugs rje'i dbang phyug 'di nyid ma
 'ongs pa'i dus su mtshan dang bkod pa 'di lta bu'i sgo nas bstan 'gro'i don byed par 'gyur ro
 zhes rtsod pa dang bral ba'i yid ched kyi lung gis nges par zin pa yin te/

[C:14] ji skad du khod³⁰ spungs blo gros thogs med rtsal gyi gter byon srid pa rgyud gyi
 kha byang lung bstan las/ 'chi med dran pa nam mkha'i zhal nas gsungs pa/ nga yi mchog gi
 sprul pa³¹ las/ phrom gshen 'od zer phog pa zhig/ brda la bkra shis mtshan can 'byung/ phrin
 las gsang sngags bon rnams ston³²/ 'gro don mtha' 'khob rtsod pa 'joms/ [T1:9b] zhes g.yung
 drung gsung gis bstan pa ste/ tshigs rkang dang po gnyis ni/ dran pa'i nam rol yin pa dang/
 phrom gshen gser thog lce 'byams kyis byin gyis brlabs pa dang/ gsum pa ni brda la zhes pa
 gang du sku bltams pa'i gnas brda snyi bse bsum du 'bod pa'i nang tshan brda khog ces/ shar

²⁸ T1 has pslu med.

²⁹ T1 has skya ring.

³⁰ T1 has something partly illegible, which looks like bod or lod.

³¹ T1 has sprul ba.

³² T1 has nyon.

zla'i klung gi 'gram rma rdza sgang ngam zla³³ sgang ring mo'i ri'i rgyud brda'i ri ngogs su
 'khrungs pa dang/ bkra shis mtshan can ni dngos kyi mtshan dang/ bzhi pa ni phrin las thams
 cad gyi gtso bo gsang sngags kyi bon sde'i bka' rten cha lag dang bcas pa spel nas bstan pa
 skyong ba'i³⁴ tshul dang/ lna pa ni dus kyi khug mtshams lcags khyi lor mtha' dmag gangs
 can du lhags pa'i lung bstan bzhin rgya thod nag to'u than kro ta zhun gyi las dmag dang/

[C:15] stod nas thod dkar kyi 'khrugs pa'i pham rgyal byung skabs/ kla klo gdugs pa can
 zil gyis gnon pa'i mthu stobs mnga³⁵ zhing bskal khug gso ba'i dpa' bo yin pas thugs bskyed
 rgya cher bskyed nas drag po'i las sbyor 'ga' zhig gnang bas mtha' dmag gi rtsod pa las rim
 gyis rgyal te/ [T1:10a] dgung lo re gcig pa rdza ding gnyis kyi mdor/ gnam sa ri gsum gru
 gsum kyi 'dzams su sa gnad gyi me btsa' steng chen mdo sngags g.yung drung bstan rgyas
 gling gsar bskrun du dam sri'i dpung dang bcas pa'i bla rdo ling ga mnan te byams khang
 chen mo'i rten legs par bzhengs nas dam sri'i rgyu srang ba³⁶ bcad de/ gangs can du sa dge
 rnying gsum kar 'brugs bon gsum bcas kyi bstan pa'i so kha skyongs ba'i phrin las skyongs
 bar bstan pa ste/ spyir mtshan tsam re la brten nas lung bstan du rlom pa'i par bkab 'dren pa
 mang po 'od³⁷ rigs su snang mod/ gnas dang phrin las 'gro don sogs gsal bar lung bstan pa 'di
 lta bu ni ci nas kyang ngo mtshar che bar sems la/ de bzhin du/ gsang sngags gling pa'i gter
 lung las/ [T1:10b] sha ri'i sprul pa bkra shis mtshan: gang mjal thar pa'i lam la bkod: zhes
 dang shar rdza'i zhing du rgyal mtshan mtshan:

³³ C has sla.

³⁴ C has skyongs pa'i.

³⁵ T1 has mngal.

³⁶ C has srang.

³⁷ C has 'ong.

[C:16] zhig po'i chas can rnal 'byor de'i: 'brel tshad bde chen zhing du 'dren: smin grol nam mkha'i khyon dang mnyam: zhes gsal bar lung gis zin pa ste/ da dung gzhan yang mang bas lung zin gyi skyes bu rnam thar mtha' yas pa'i³⁸ bdag nyid can du shes par bya'o//

gdul bya'i bsod nams dpyid kyis nyer drangs pa'i// rnam 'dren dam pa'i gsang gsum dbyar gyi dpal// 'char ba'i ltas su dam pa'i lung byang gi/ khu byug gzhon nu dga' ba'i mgron du lhags// dus gsum mkhyen pa rnam gyi g.yung drung gsung// bslu med dus su 'doms pa'i nga bo³⁹ ches// lhar bcas skye rgu yongs kyi 'du⁴⁰ sa ru// bsngags pa'i⁴¹ dbyangs snyan sgra 'dzin bcud du gyur//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o/

gnyis pa lung bzhin 'gro ba'i don du byon tshul dngos la gsum/ [T1:11a] kun la thun mong du grags pa phyi'i rnam thar/ thun mong ma yin pa nang gi rnam thar/ te las kyang ches thun mong ma yin pa⁴² gsang ba'i rnam thar ro/

[C:17] dang po la gnyis/ dngos dang/ de'i don bsdu ba'o/ dang po la brgyad/ sku'i skye ba ji ltar bzhes pa'i tshul/ rig pa'i rtsal sad nas sa lam thod rgal du bgrod pa'i tshul/ bstan don la dgongs nas lam la rim par zhugs pa'i tshul/ yongs 'dzin bshes gnyen rnam las smin grol gyi bdud rtsi bzhes pa'i tshul/ de nas dben pa'i gnas su sgrub pa'i phyag rjes skyongs pa'i tshul/ de la brten nas bstan 'gro'i don mdzad pa'i tshul/ khyad par bstan pa rjes bzhag gi phrin las spel ba'i tshul/ zhar byung du sku che ba'i yon tan bzhan smos pa'o/ dang po ni/ de yang rje bla ma 'di nyid nges pa'i don du rgyal ba thams cad dang gnyis su med pa'i rgyal thabs la mnga'

³⁸ T1 has mtha' yas ba.

³⁹ T1 has rdo bo.

⁴⁰ T1 has 'dun.

⁴¹ C has psngags pa'i.

⁴² C has a '/' here.

brnyes pas⁴³ 'gro ba 'dul ba'i phrin las la phyogs re ba'i tshad bzung du med kyang/ [T1:11b]
 re zhig phyogs gcig gi dbang du byas nas gnas skabs 'dir skye ba mngon par bzhes shing ngo
 mtshar ba'i ldas bzang du mas skye bo rnams dga' ba bskyed pa'i tshul smos pa la gnyis/
 mdzes sku'i nyin byed bltams tshul dang/ dam pa'i rang rtags mnga' tshul lo/ dang po ni/

thugs bskyed 'od snang sa gsum kun khyab kyang/ phrin las shing rta mos pa'i rjes 'gro
 bas/

[C:18] gangs can shar phyogs g.yung drung lhun po'i zhol/ bsam bzhin skye ba bzhes la
 gsol ba 'debs/

zhes smos te/ te yang 'di skad ces rjes su thos te/ skyes bu dam pa 'di'i bsam bzhin du
 skye ba'i srid pa nye bar bzung ba'i yul ni/⁴⁴ gangs can bod yul kyi shar phyogs/ mdo khams
 smad kyi yul ljongs chen po/ dngul rdza zal mo'i sgang gi shar phyogs zla sgang ring mo'i ri'i
 rgyud/ mkhas pa dang grub pa'i skyes bu rab tu mang po byon cing byin gyis brlabs pa'i yul
 gru rdza khog ces 'bod pa/ [T1:12a] rdza chu dang brda chu gya gyur 'bab pa'i bar mtshams
 su shar rdza g.yung drung lhun po zhes grub pa'i gnas chen gyen za mched gsum gyis skyong
 ba'i nye 'dabs spyod yul gyi grong khyer brda zhes 'bod pa'i ri rgyud kyi 'dabs su/ chen po hor
 gyi mi rigs las byung ba'i yab bon rgyud 'dzin⁴⁵ pa'i dge bsnyen bkra shis dga' dang/ yum rigs
 bzang □akk'i mtshan can bo legs bya ba gnyis las/ bod rtsis rab byung bcu bzhi pa'i nang
 gses don grub ces pa sa mo lug gi lor mngal gyi chu 'dzin las nye bar grol ba'i gzugs sku'i zla
 ba'i dkyil 'khor mngon par tshes par gyur to zhes grags pa'i yi ges yongs su mdzes par gyur
 to/ gnyis pa ni/

⁴³ C omits pas.

⁴⁴ C omits '/' here.

⁴⁵ C has quotation marks surrounding rgyud 'dzin.

[C:19] ngo tshar snang ba'i ltas bzang dang 'grogs pa'i// mtshan dpe'i zla zhal tshes pa'i mod nyid nas// pal pa'i yul 'das dam pa'i rnam 'gyur gyi// 'od ris 'gogs med 'char la gsol ba 'debs//

[T1:12b] zhes smos te/ skyes bu dam pa rnam ni legs par goms pa'i yon tan gyi rang 'od dang nam yang mi 'bral bas sku bltams ma thag nas mtshan ltas bzang zhing/ bskyed bsring pa'i skabs rnam nas rgyud 'jam la gtsang sbra che ba dang/ dad pa dang snying rje'i nyams gsal zhing blo rig lhag par rno ba dang/ spyod lam dang lus kyi rnam 'gyur ci byas pa thams cad ya rabs kyi bya ba kho na la gshol ba dang/ byis pa'i dus nas yon tan la dgyes pa'i bag chags shugs che bas rten mchod dang rab byung gi cha lugs 'chang ba la lhag par dgyes tshor gnang zhing/ bla ma'i dbyibs byas nas dbang bskur ba dang bon 'chad pa'i rtsed mo kho na mdzad pa dang/ nam mkha' nas lha'i gzugs 'di dang 'di 'dra ba mthong tshul dang gsung 'di 'dra byon zhes zhal gzigs lung bstan gyi rnam pa du ma mnga' ba dang/ dgung lo dgu bzhes pa'i skabs rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug dba zhig grub chen bstan 'dzin dbang rgyal lam dran pa bdud 'dul nyid kyi zhal snga nas/

[C:20; T1:13a] yab yum gnyis la khyed kyi bu 'di⁴⁶ rab byung byed dgos zhes bka'i me tog spyi bor phebs pa na/ nged la bu gcig pu 'di las med pas rngo mi thogs zhes zhus pas/ de nas mi ring bar rje nyid la lha'i bskul ma lta bus byis pa'i khrod nas glo bu du smyo zhing nyin zhag mang por zas mi za ba zhig byung ba'i rkyen gyis/ slar yang grub dbang rin po che'i mdun du dgongs dag⁴⁷ dang skyobs 'jug zhur phyin pas bu 'di las 'phro bzang ba zhig yin 'dug pas bon sgor ma zhugs na khyed la phan thogs pa zhig mi 'ong zhes gsungs pas/ bka' las 'das ma nus te grwa pa byed rtsis kyi zhu ba legs par phul mtshams/ khyim du 'ong bas

⁴⁶ C has de.

⁴⁷ T1 has dgongs rtags.

de nyid rang nas smyo nad kyang dwangs shing thugs dgyes pa'i rnam 'gyur gyis nyin zhag
 mang por 'da' ba zhig byung⁴⁸ ngo zhes grags pa'i dbyangs snyan rna ba'i bdud rtsi ru gyur to/
 [T1:13b]

snyigs ma'i dus 'dir rlabs chen phrin las kyis// snga 'gyur bstan pa nyin mor byed slad du//
 shar phyogs grub pa'i sman ljongs nyams dga' bar// mtshan dpe'i dpag bsam dbang po 'di
 bltams so//

gang gi zhabs jung bkra shis 'khor lo'i rdul// zhing 'dir thog mar lhung ba'i mod nyid nas//
 'gro khams bsod nams dwangs pa'i shel dkar ngogs// rten 'byung dge ba'i ri mo cir yang gsal//
 zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

gnyis pa rigs sad cing lam thod rgal du bgrod tshul ni/ 'phags chen rnam ni gang du sku
 bltams kyang sa 'og gi gser bzhin du dam pa'i rang rtags kyi 'od snang nam yang 'gog tu med
 pas chung ngu'i dus nas legs tshogs kyi rten 'brel lhun grub tu 'grigs pas rang byung gi mal
 'byor chen po'i go 'phang bdag gir bzhes pa'i tshul smos pa la gnyis/ rigs bdag bla ma'i rjes su
 bzung tshul/ [T1:14a] dam pa'i rigs sad nas rang byung gi rtogs pa brnyes tshul lo/

dang po ni/

snang sems dbang bsgyur dbra zhig grub chen gyis// byin brlabs dbang bskur phyi nang
 bar chad bsal// ma 'ongs bstan pa'i bdag por 'gyur ro zhes//

[C:22] lung bstan dbugs dbyung stsal la gsol ba 'debs//

zhes smos te/ 'chi med rig 'dzin chen po bla chen dran pa'i thugs sprul dbra zhig grub
 chen rin po che de nyid rje 'di nyid kyi tshe rabs du ma mang po'i gong nas rigs kyi bdag por
 gyur pa'i bla ma thun min yin stabs sku chung ngu'i dus nas 'zigs pa rgya chen po gnang

⁴⁸ C has one set of quotation marks between zhig and byung.

zhing/ rje nyid nas kyang rgyu mtshan med par dad pa rang shugs kyis 'ong ba zhig yod
 gsungs/ sku bltams ma thag nas bgegs la bka' bsgo dang ye shes 'bebs pa'i byin rlabs mang du
 gnang zhing tshe dbang dang 'brel bar tshe ring ba'i rten 'brel dang zhal bkod ci rigs mdzad/
 [T1:14b] khyad par sku mdun du bcar nas grwa pa'i mgo 'bul zhus skabs thun mong skabs
 'gro'i sdom pa zhig gnang ste bstan pa dang sems can la phan thogs pa'i thugs smon rgya chen
 po dang 'brel par bkra shis rgyal mtshan zhes pa'i ming gi cod pan gnang/ srung ma spyi dang
 ma cig bka' gsang lha mo la phrin bcol nan tan mdzad cing dgongs gtad khyad par can gnang/
 lo ngo bcu gnyis pa'i dus su rigs kyi khu bo g.yung drung rgyal mtshan las klog bslab pas yig
 ldeb bdun bslab mtshams tshegs med du mkhyen pa byung/ de nas mi ring bar grub chen
 nyid kyi mdun nas bka' dbang dang gdams khrid lung tshan ci rigs gnang ba zhus pas/

[C:23] grub rje nyid nas ma 'ongs pa'i 'byung 'gyur rnams lung bstan te/ khyod rang bstan
 pa la bya ba byed dgos rigs su 'dug pas sdom pa gsum la gnas nas smin grol gyi bdud rtsi
 bzhes tshul dang/ sgom sgrub la 'bad nas bstan pa'i zhabs 'degas dang 'gro don rgya chen po
 byed dgos pa'i zhal bkod dang 'brel bar bslab bya gnang zhing dran bskul mdzad/ [T1:15a]
 lan gcig pu ti lung dbang gi sgo nas rjes gnang mdzad cing bsngags brjod rgya che ba'i sgo
 nas bstan pa'i bdag por mnga' gsol de gzeng⁴⁹ bstod gnang bas de tshun chad nas sngon
 sbyangs kyi rig rtsal sad pa'i rten 'brel rnams lhun grub tu 'grigs pas legs lam gyi dge mtshan
 thams cad ches cher 'phel ba'i mthun rkyen du gyur pa yin no//

gnyis pa ni/

sngon sbyangs mthu dang grub dbang mchog nyid kyi// dgongs brgyud byin rlabs thob
 pa'i rten 'brel las// theg rtse'i lam nas rig pa'i rtsal chen sad//

[24] rang byung rnal 'byor mchog la gsol ba 'debs//

zhes smos te/ rje bla ma 'di ni thugs rje yas sprul gyi ston pa gdul bya'i don du byon pa
 yin pas lam mas sbyangs kyi gang zag ltar lam la rtsol bas 'jug dgos pa zhid ma yin pas/
 [T1:15b] sngon nas goms pa'i sbyangs stobs kyi yon tan rlabs su che bas chung ngu'i dus nas
 dad pa dang/ nges 'byung dang/ snying rje la sogs pa dam pa'i rigs kyi yon tan rnams gsal bar
 sad pa'i rgyu dang/ rigs bdag dbra zhid grub chen gyis dgongs pa 'pho ba'i byin rlabs las theg
 rtse bla med kyi lam nas rigs pa'i rtsal yongs su sad pa yin te/ de'ang sku gzhon pa'i dus su
 grub dbang dam pa'i zhabs 'bring gral du bzhugs nas sgrub khang du lha gsol gyi khur bzhes
 pa'i skabs shig na/ yul du than pa chen po byung ba'i tshe grub rje nyid kyi zhabs phyi byas te
 char slong byon pas/ sku nyid la ral gri zhid gtad nas rlung gnong byed du bcug skabs/ re zhid
 nas grub rje nyid gar byon cha med par byung ste ral gri de 'phrog thabs su blangs te hur bag
 gi rnam pas sku la drag shul gyis btab pas/ de'i rkyen gyis dar tsam du rig pa brgyal thabs su
 song/ de las sad pa dang don brgyud kyi dgongs pa rgyud la 'phos te grub chen nyid dang
 mnyam pa'i rtogs pa mngon du gyur pas de nas bzung nyin mtshan gyi 'od gsal la khyad par
 ma byung gsung/

[C:25; T1:16a] de phyin chad nas shes bya thams cad la mi 'jigs pa'i spobs pa nang nas
 rdol te/ thun mong gi rig gnas la yi ge'i dag sbyor tsam yang gzhan las slob ma myong yang
 gzhung lugs thams cad gang nas bltas kyang tol shes su byung bas da lta'i mdzod chen rnams
 kyi sa bon rnams de dus nas 'thor bu'i tshul du ci rigs su bris pa'ang yod snang/ sa lam gyi
 yon tan thams cad dgongs pa'i rtsal las ngang ngam shugs kyis rgyud la rdzogs pas ched du
 bsgom pa sogs 'bad rtsol la ltos ma dgos par rang byung rnal 'byor mchog gi go 'phang la
 zhabs pad bkod pa yin te/ theg rtse rdzogs pa chen po'i gzhung lam nas dgongs pa mngon du
 byur pas dbang po rim gyis pa'i lam la rim rtsol gyi lugs ltar ma yin par dbang rab cig car ba'i
 rtogs pa'i mthu la brten nas rim dgu'i theg pa thams cad la mnga' dbang bsgyur nus pa'i nges

pa⁵⁰ don gyi rnal 'byor du yongs su grags shing grub pa'o/ 'on kyang gzhan ngor spas pa'i
tshul du dus de tsam na sgrub brgyud gong ma'i phyag len bzhin dbu ral dang sba 'khar⁵¹ la
brten pa'i rtogs ldan dkyus ma'i tshul du bzhugs pa yin no//

[C:26] rigs kyi bdag po grub dbang mchog nyid kyis// brda thabs rten 'brel me tog 'thor
ba'i mod// legs tshogs ji snyed gting nas sad 'gyur ba'i/ shis pa brjod la rgyal rnams bgros te
byon// 'jigs med brtul zhugs spyod pa'i lde mig gis/ sngon sbyangs nges pa'i gsang mdzod sgo
phye nas// zung 'jug mchog gi pha phog brnyes ma thag/ rang byung rnal 'byor khri la ngang
gis 'dzegs// zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o/

[T1:17a] gnyis pa bstan don la dgong nas lam la rim par zhugs tshul ni/ skyabs rje dam pa
'di nyid rang byung gi rnal 'byor du bzhugs pas rang don la dmigs nas bstan la rim 'jug gi
rtsol ba mi dgos kyang/ snyigs ma'i dus 'dir bstan pa 'ba' zhig la thugs dgongs nyer bar bzhag
nas bstan la rim par zhugs pa'i tshul smos pa la gnyis/ lam rim 'jug la dgyes par gyur tshul
dang/ sdom pa gsum rim can du bzhes tshul lo/ dang po ni/

rgyal ba gnyis pa'i ring lugs la brten nas// gong ma'i mdzad srol gzhan la 'doms pa'i slad/
bstan la rim par zhugs pa'i brtul zhugs kyis// skal ldan ngo mtshar spel la gsol ba 'debs//

zhes smos te/ snga⁵² gong nas dbra zhig grub chen gyi lung bstan dang 'brel bar bslob
ston gnang ba dus su bab pa dang/ [T1:17b] bzhan yang brag dkar rdo rje 'chang blo bzang
bstan 'dzin snyan grags gang gi zhal snga nas kyang ched du bskul ma mdzad pa ltar/ bstan
pa la rim par zhugs pa'i thugs bskyed 'khrung nas de bzhin tu phyag len tu mdzad pa yin te/
rje nyid gter chen gsang sngags gling pa'i gter lung bka' thang chen mo'i don bzhin gter ston

50 T1 has des pa.

51 C has spa mkhar; T1 has sba mkhar.

52 T1 has sda.

chen po'i skal ba can du bzhugs shing/ tshul de'i sgo nas dben par sgrub pa'i rgyal mtshan
 btsugs na/ sku tshe 'di nyid la 'ja' lus su gshegs pa'i nges gsang thun min thugs la mnga'
 na'ang re zhig ji skad du/ 'dul khrims bslab bya'i mnga' bdag drang srong rgyal/ zab lam
 sngags kyi bdag nyid gsang 'dus gshen/ gnas lugs rdzogs chen don rtogs kun tu bzang/ zhe
 rgyal ba gnyis pa mnyam med chen po'i rnam thar las byung ba'i bka' srol bzhin/ spyod pa
 dus skabs dang 'tshams pas gdul bya rnams rim kyi kha drangs te lam la 'dzud pa dang/
 [T1:18a] theg pa thun mong la brten nas thun min gsang sems kyi lam la nye bar spyor ba'i⁵³
 tshul shes nas rgyal ba'i bstan pa thams cad 'gal med du rtogs pa dang/

[C:28] gdul bya thams cad kyi don du 'gyur ba⁵⁴ dang/ de'i stobs kyi bshad sgrub zung
 'brel gyi sgo nas bshen bstan rin po che phyogs kun tu spel nus pa'i dgos pa khyad par can la
 dgongs nas/ rang don gyi nyams len tsam la thugs zhen gyis ma gzigs par dbu rig zhabs rjen
 ngur smrig 'chang ba'i brtul zhugs **dwangs**⁵⁵ du bzhes nas dus kyi tha ma 'di lta bur yang snga
 dar gyi bstan pa rin po che 'di nyid cung zad dar rgyas su 'gyur ram snyam du bstan pa 'ba'
 zhig gi dbang du mdzad nas bstan pa spyi lugs dang mthun pa'i 'jug rim gyi phyag bzhes
 skyong bar mdzad pa ni/ bstan pa'i bdag po rgyal ba mnyam med chen po'i thugs bzhed rjes
 su skong ba dang/ [T1:18b] don gyi rgyal tshabs su gyur pa'i 'bras rtags yang dag pa yin bar
 rjes su mthong ngo/

gnyis pa ni/

mkhan chen bla ma mtshung med rig 'dzin rjer// sdom pa gsum gyi bka' drin legs nos
 nas// spang blang gnas la tshul bzhin brtson pa yi// sum ldan rig pa 'dzin la gsol ba 'debs//

53 C has spyor pha'i.

54 C has 'gyur pa.

55 C has dang.

[C:29] zhes smos te/ 'di la nang gses gsum las/ dang po so thar gyi sdom pa bzhes tshul ni/ de'ang sku chung ngu'i dus nas spyod lam gtsang zhing rnam par dag pa'i tshul kho nar bzhugs shing/ thun mong dang thun mong min pa'i skyabs 'gro'i bslabs bya'i spyi dang dge bsnyen gtan khrims sna lnga'i bslab pa rnams la gces spras su mdzad pas kun gyis bsngags pa'i gnas su gyur/ khyad par du lha 'grel las/ tshul khrims ma nyams sgrib pa dag/ sgrib pa dag pas ting 'dzin bsal/ ding 'dzin gsal bas shes rab grol/ zhes gsung pa ltar yon tan thams cad kyī gzhi rten tshul khrims yin pa'i tshul bka' dang bka' rten rnams las rgya cher byung ba'i don bzhin g.yung drung gi bon 'dul ba la brten nas rab tu byung bar bzhed de/ [T1:19a] thog mar rje mnyam med chen po'i gdan sa dpal ldan sman ri ba'i dgon lag gtsang rab legs g.yung drung gling gi mkhan chen dam pa gshen bstan skal bzang nyi ma tog gi rgyal mtshan nyid mdo smad du byon pa dang 'dzoms⁵⁶ ste/ rdza steng chen dgon dpal bshen bstan 'chi med mdo sngags g.yung drung bshad sgrub 'phel rgyas gling du gdan drangs skabs/ gnas brtan 'dul ba 'dzin pa mtha' dag gi khyu mchog dam pa mkhan rin po chen gong nyid dbu bzhugs ngos/ gshen ste gtsang 'dus kyī dbus su rab tu byung ste gtsang ma gtsug phud⁵⁷ kyī sdom pa legs par zhus/

[C:30] tshul ming 'dogs skabs su mkhan po'i zhal snga nas bstan pa 'brug grags zhes lan gsum gsungs byung bas/ der 'khod thams cad kyis snang ba 'ur ba ltar byung ste bstan pa 'brug grags zer nas bzhad mo chen po zhig byung bas mkhan po nas kho bos rten 'brel brtag pa 'di legs lam du shar gsung shing phyis 'byung lung bstan yang mdzad/ [T1:19b] de rjes

56 C has 'dzam, while T1 has mdzam. Neither term can be found in dictionaries. The meaning would seem to suggest 'dzoms.

57 T1 has gtsug pud.

mdo khams⁵⁸ zhig po bco brgyad kyi nang tshan stag zhig mchog sprul rin po che gshen rgyal bstan 'dzin rdza khog tu byon skabs/ rang dgon gyi gtsug lag khang dam pa der gdan drangs nas/ ji skad du 'dul ba mdor btus las/ tshul khrims ldan dang de nyid mkhas/ gzhan don mdzad dang nus las blang/ zhes gsungs pa ltar rje sman ri ba'i⁵⁹ 'dul rgyud bar ma chad pa las byon pa'i sdom rgyun⁶⁰ ltar mkhas btshun phan 'dogs kyi yon tan rmad du byung ba'i mngon par mtho bas mkhan rin po che ~gang nyid kyi zhal snga nas gtsor mdzad/ blob dpon dang/ dpang po dang/ lo tsaa ba⁶¹ dang bcas pa'i dad pa'i dge 'dun gyi dbus su bsnyen par rdzogs te dag pa drang srong gi sdom ldan du bsgrub par mdzad/ [T1:20a] tshul ming⁶² du bstan pa 'brug grags dri med sning po zhes gsol bar mdzad/

[C:31] mkha po dang las grwa bcas la gtang rag kyang phul/ de nas bzung chang rag gtan nas mi bzhes shing/ bsngo sha mi gsol pa dang/ pags shun gyi gos mi gyon pa sogs 'dul ba dang mthun pa'i kun spyod gtsang par mdzad/ mtshan phyag dang chab gtor la sogs pa dus dang rgyun gyi bon spyod kyi bya ba sogs dge spyod spyi dang/ nang du bslab pa gsum dang rjes su 'brel pa'i zhi gnas kyi gso sbyong gi nyams len dang bcas spang lam mdo'i nyams len la tshul bzhin du brtson par mdzad cing spyang pa'i yon tan gyi brtul zhugs bzang po mnga'/ de ltar snga phyi sdom pa bzhes nas bzung yan lag bzhi ldan gyi pham pa'm sbyor ba sum tshang gi nyes ltung rtza ba dang yan lag dang nyes byas su gyur pa'i rdul dang dri ma thams cad las 'das pa'i phyi tshul brgya dang bdun cu rtza drug dang/ [T1:20b] nang khrims nyis

58 T1 has mod khams.

59 C has sman ri pa'i.

60 T1 has snom rgyun.

61 T1 has lo tsa ba.

62 C has mib.

brgya dang lnga bcu zung 'brel gyi sdom pa'i padma⁶³ dkar po ches cher bzhad pas lha dang
 bcas pa'i 'gro ba thams cad kyis bsngags par 'os pa'i dri bsung dngar pos phyogs kyī khor yug
 kun tu khyab par gyur ro⁶⁴//

gnyis pa sems dpa'i sdom pa bzhes tshul ni/ rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i go 'phang
 don du gnyer ba la med na mi 'byung gi sa bon grung po ni byang chub kyī sems rin po che
 yin la/ de'i tshul la ring nas goms pa'i mthar son kyang gdul bya'i skye bo rnams rjes su
 bzung pa'i slad du byang chub sems dpa'i sdom pa tshul bzhin du gsan par mdzad de/

[C:32] de'ang sems sdom gyi rgyun 'di snga gong chad med du bzhugs pa las/ dus phyis
 rang yul du rgyun phra bas sems sdom zhu gnang gi srol yang mi 'dug pa lta bur song 'dug
 pa'i skabs/ bstan pa'i rgyun la dgong nas 'bad pa chen po'i btsal nas mtshungs med dge ba'i
 bshes gnyen rgyal sras sems dpa' chen po bsam gtan ye shes⁶⁵ mdun nas theg chen lha'i me
 long las byung ba ltar yan lag tshang ba'i sgo nas legs par gsan/ [T1:21a] mtshan rgyal sras
 gzhan phan nor bu zhes gnang ste gzing bstod mdzad/ phyis su mdo dpal ri mkhyen brtse rin
 po che'i slob ma bde chen 'od zer las chos lugs kyī sems stom shing rta'i srol gnyis las byung
 ba'ang legs par gsan zhing kun rdzob dang don dam pa'i byang chub kyī sems la blo sbyongs
 pa'i gdams pa rnams kyang gsan par gda/ de dag so so'i skabs su'ang mar me dang bdug spos
 sogs mchod pa'i sprin rgya cher spro ba dang/ dngos po gya nom pa ci 'byor sems bskyed pa'i
 rten du phul zhing/ de nas brtsams te rnam pa kun tu rang 'khris dang g.yo sgyu'i dri ma dang

63 C has pamda.

64 C and T1 have gyur to.

65 C has bsam gtan ye ches.

ma 'dres pa'i sems dpa'i spyod pa spyi dang/⁶⁶ bye brag tu srol gnyis las byung ba'i bslab bya thugs rje'i sdom pa nyi shu pa dang/

[C:33; T1:21b] sems dpa'i sdom pa mdo bzhi dang/ thun mong du rgyas pa sum brgya drug cu dang/ 'bring po brgya dang rtsa brgyad dang/ bsdus pa nyi shu rtsa brgyad dang/ yang bsdus sems bskyed ma bzhi dang/ yang dag bsdus pa sna gcig bcas mdor na nyes spyod sdom pa dang/ dge ba bon sdud dang/ sems can don byed kyi tshul khriṃs rnamś la nyes ltung gi rigs phra moś kyang ma gos par pha rol tu phyin pa drug dang bsdus ba'i dngos po bzhiś mtshon pa'i sems dpa'i bslab pa dpag bśam kyi grib bśil la brten nas rang gzhan thams cad bde bar dbugs 'byin pa'i spyod tshul dri ma med pa kun gyis spyod yul du gyur pa'i mtshon no//

gsum pa sngags sdom bzhes tshul ni/ grangs med du mar dka' ba spyod pa sogs la ltos mi dgos par thabs shes bde myur gyi lam gyis gtan bde'i go 'phang la spyor ba'i nye lam zab mo/ [T1:22a] gsang sems bla med dang bcas pa'i sdom pa gśan tshul rgyas pa 'og tu 'byung zhing/ 'dir gzhi dbang gtso bo'i dbang du byas na/ bka'i drin mtshungs zla dang bral ba'i rigs kyi bdag po dbra zhiḡ grub chen bśtan 'dzin dbang rgyal gyi mdun nas/ spyi spungs dbal gsas rngam pa'i dkyil 'khor du smin byed kyi dbang bśkur zhiḡ sems don gyi ngo sprod thun min gnang/

[C:34] rgyal thabs spyi blugs kyi dbang bśkur zhiḡ dgongs pa'i rtsal gyis byin rlabs kyi 'pho ba thob pas bla ma gzhan gang dang yang mi mnyam pa'i bka' drin che ba'i mchog tu gyur/ gter 'byin grub rigs bye ba'i gtsug rgyan dam pa rig 'dzin tshe dbang grags pa'am bde chen gling pa'i zhal snga nas dbal gsas zhi drag gi dbang dang/ 'od zer dpag med gyi gdams

66 C omits '/'

pa la brten nas pu sti lung dbang dang 'brel bar bka' btad⁶⁷ thun min gnan/ don dam ye shes
 kyi dkyil 'khor du rig pa rtsal gyi dbang bskur gnan/ [T1:22b] a khrid dang 'brel bar sngon
 'gro dang/ yi dam bskyed rdzogs kyi go khrid/ dngos gzhi'i ngo sprod zhal khrid du gnan/
 zhing byin rlabs khyad par chan thob pas bla ma mchog tu gzigs pa'i gus pa chen po gnan/
 des mtshon pa'i gsang sngags smin grol gyi sgor zhugs nas dam tshig gi rnam grangs rgyud⁶⁸
 sde'i rim pa so so dang/ phyi bskyed rim gyi dam tshig rtsa ba lnga dang yan lag nyer lnga/
 nang rdzogs rim gyi dam tshig rtsa ba lnga dang/ yan lag la spyi dam dang/ sbom po⁶⁹ dang/
 nyes byas dang/ che pa dam tshig bcas dang/ gsang ba⁷⁰ rdzogs chen gyi dam tshig bcu phrag
 gsum dang/ srung med bzhi sogs rgyud las byung bzhin de dag la nyes ltung gi dri mas ma
 gos shing/

[C:35] yi dam so so'i bsnyen sgrub dang/ bzlas brjod dang/ gtor ma'i rim pa la sogs pa
 chags med du gnan zhing rnal 'byor gsum gyi nyams len la rtag du gnas pa dang/ mthar thug
 mnyam pa chen po'i dgongs pa las nam yang mi 'da' zhing gsang chen g.yung drung theg pa'i
 dam tshig gi rgyan gyi cir yang mdzes pas nges pa don gyis g.yung drung gi slob dpon chen
 po'i go 'phang la ngang gis 'dzegs pa'i dpa' bo chen por bzhugs pa ste/ [T1:23a] de ltar bstan
 'gro'i don la dgongs nas sdom pa gsum la rim par zhugs shing rjes su slob pa'i tshul ma nor ba
 la brten nas/ thugs rgyud gcig la phyi nang gsang ba'i bstan rim yongs su rdzogs pa lag len du
 khyer nus pa'i sum ldan rig pa 'dzin pa zhes pa'i mtshan snyan gyi cod pa.n bla na mtho
 zhing/ de'i sgo nas phyogs kyi skye rgu thams cad dad pa dang/ 'dun pa dang/ yid ches pa'i

67 C has bka' btang

68 C has rgyu.

69 C has spom po.

70 C has gsang pa.

mos pa dang 'brel bar sgo gsum 'jug pa gcig pas bsti stang gi gnas su gyur pa'i skyes bu dam
pa chen po'o/

khyod thugs grub gnyis rtogs pa'i bdud rtsi yis// gang pa'i bum pa bzhin du ches gang
yang//

[C:36] snyigs ma'i gdul bya rnams kyi don slad du// [T1:23b] bstan la rim par zhugs pa'i
brtul zhugs ngoms// 'dul khrims pomda'i tshal du gnas bcas nas// ngur smrig bla gos mdzes
pa'i 'dzum 'od dang// 'phags pa dgyis pa'i tshul khrims gsung zhim gyis// yid can bung tshogs
'dun pa'i ngo mtshar 'phel// mtha' yas 'gro la rjes su dgongs pa yis// byang chub sems kyi
bslab gzhi la brten nas// rlabs chen spyod pa'i tshul dang mi 'bral bas// rnam 'dren yongs kyi
gdung 'tshob gcig tu gyur// dbal gshen grub pa mchog gi rgyal thabs la// thabs kyi lam nas
mnga' gsol brnyes nas kyang// snang srid 'dod rgur bsgyur ba'i mig 'phrul gyi// nyams brgyas
gar du rtsen de rol min nam//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

bzhi pa⁷¹ yongs 'dzin bshes gnyen rnams las smin grol gyi bdud rtsi bzhes⁷² pa'i tshul ni/
sku gsum ston pa mchog nas brgyud pa bar ma chad par byung ba'i bon ste zab mo rnams kyi
smin grol gyi rgyun rnams yongs kyi bshes gnyen rnams las brgyud pa'i khung btsal nas tshul
bzhin du gsan bzhes gnang ba'i tshul cung zad smos pa la gnyis/

[C:37; T1:24a] rtsa ba bshes gnyen ji ltar bsten tshul dang/ de las smin grol ji ltar bzhes
tshul lo/ dang bo ni/

71 C and T1 both have gsum pa, but this does not accurately reflect the divisions given above in the text.

72 C has bshes.

mkhas shing grub pa'i bshes gnyen mchog gyur pa// nyi shu rtsa bzhi'i zhabs la nyer btud nas// mnyes pa gsum gyi tshul bzhin bsten pa yis// dam pa'i nram thar bskyangs la gsol ba 'debs//

zhes smos te/ mdo⁷³ las/ brgyad khri bzhi stong phyi nang gsang/ theg pa rim dgu sgo bzhi mdzod/ gsang ba'i man ngag thams cad kyi/ 'byung gnas bla ma dam pa yin/ zhes gsungs pa ltar/ yon tan thams cad kyi gzhi rten bla ma dge ba'i bshes ghyen kho na la rag las pas/ dam pa 'di ni chung ngu'i dus nas ris med pa'i bla ma bsten pa la ches cher thugs dgyes pa shig yin te/ [T1:24b] teng sang snyigs ma'i dus 'dir rang lugs kyi bla ma re tsam la yon tan yod med **gang ltar la**⁷⁴ sangs rgyas su 'dzin cing gzhan la gus pa lhod pa dang/ gal te rang las 'jig rten gyi ngos nas thob thang dang longs spyod sogs kyis dman pa'i bla ma bon gyi yon tan yod kyang rang gi che ba nyams kyi dogs nas bsten mi spro ba sogs skyes bu dam pa'i nram thar la rgyab kyis phyogs pa nams kyis lugs ltar ma yin par mtha' dbus kyi phyogs du ma nas dge ba'i bshes gnyen dam pa gang zhig bzhugs pa phal mo che'i zhabs la gtug nas gus pas btud cing tshul bzhin du bsten pa yin la/

[C:38] de dag las bon sde dpe tshan re re'i ched du'ang dka' ba du mar mdzad nas gsan par mdzad cing/ de dang 'brel bar 'phral du bla ma nams la lus ngag⁷⁵ yid gsum gus pas bsnyen bkur ba dang/ zhabs kyi rkang stegs nas btud cing rjed par bya ba dang/ [T1:25a] dngos po rgya mi che rung spus nam gtsang ba'i zhu rten ci 'byor pa re dang bcas rang gi 'tsho chas 'byor min la mi gzigs pa gsan pa dang/ mthar gsan bzhes nams gshar sgom dang/ nyams khrid dang/ bsnyan bzlas dang/ 'don mchod sogs gang gi skabs dang 'brel ba de ltar

73 T1 has mod.

74 T1 has gang ltar yang.

75 T1 has dag.

rjes su bsgrub pa'i dam bca' dang bcas te tshul bzhin du bsten pa ste/ teng sang ni gal chung
 bon la byed pa'i skabs su snang bas/ phal mo ches sangs rgyas kyi bon khur chen zhig las
 kyang 'jig rten gyi zang zing phra mo tsam la brtsi bzhag che zhing/ dka' tshegs dang zhu
 'degs mi dgos par sa stong nas shugs kyis thob rgyu lta bu zhig byung na 'dod cing/ de la'ang
 ngas khyod la bon zhus so zhes mnyan pa'i drin brtsi ba sogs dus ngan **bdo**⁷⁶ ba'i skabs 'dir
 mchis pa rnam la **dpag**⁷⁷ na rje bla ma'i rnam par⁷⁸ thar pa⁷⁹ 'di tsam yang ya mtshan pa'i
 gnas su snang bas⁸⁰ shes pa gal che bar mchis so/

[C:39; T1:25b] gnyis pa ni/

gangs can 'dir byon bon sgo ji snyed pa// rab 'byoms rgyud sde yongs kyi bdud rtsi'i
 rgyun// thugs kyi bum pa bzang por legs bskyil bas// smin grol yongs su rdzogs la gsol ba
 'debs//

zhes smos te/ dge ba'i bshes gnyen gang dang gang las bon ci dang ci ltar gsan tshul mtha'
 dag brjod kyis mi langs kyang/ gtso che ba'i dbang du byas na yang dag pa yongs kyi dge ba'i
 bshes gnyen nyi shu rtsa bzhi'i zhabs pad bsten nas bon ste rnam zhus pa ste/ de yang sras
 bcas rnam 'dren yongs kyi ye shes sgyu ma'i sku can bla chen dngos byon dbra zhig grub pa'i
 dbang phyug bstan 'dzin dbang gi gyal po'am dran pa bdud 'dul rtsal gyi zhal snga nas dbang
 gsan tshul gong smos rnam dang/ kham brgyad gtan la phab pa'i 'bum sogs lung dang/ khod
 po'i sa bdag gtad sprugs kyi skor dang a bse'i srog dbang la sogs pa mang du zhus shing thob/

76 T1 has bod.

77 T1 has dpags.

78 C has rnam pa.

79 C has thar ba.

80 C has snang pas.

[T1:26a] brtan mkhas kyi yon tan yongs su rdzogs pa'i mkhan chen dam pa skal bzang nyi
ma tog gi rgyal mtshan las rab byung zhus pa 'brel bar/

[C:40] skye sgo gcod pa'i mdo/ char 'bebs kyi cho ga sogs lung tshan rgya cher gsan/
mkhas btsun bzang po'i yon tan gyi dpal gyis mngon par mtho ba'i khri chen gshen rgyal
bstan 'dzin mdun nas bsnyen rdzogs dang 'brel bar/ gtsang ma klu 'bum skor dang/ khro bo
lha rgod thog pa'i skor sogs dbang lung gsan/ gzhan phan byang chub kyi sems la thugs legs
par 'byongs ba'i drang srong chen po sum ldan bsam gtan ye shes las byang sdom dang 'brel
bar/ rdzogs chen yang rtse klong chen skor dang/ 'od gsal bdun skor kyi nyams khrid dang
'brel bar sgom don gyi man ngag smar ba sogs gsan/ gter 'byin grub rigs bye ba'i gtsug rgyan
dam pa rig 'dzin tshe dbang grags pa'am bde chen gling pa'i drung nas dbang khrid gong
smos dang/ [T1:26b] mdo sde bskal pa bzang po sogs rgya cher gsan/ 'chi med bla ma **gyer
spung**⁸¹ chen po nyid zhing 'dir kun grol mtshan gyi rnam pas byon pa snyigs dus gdul dka'i
'dren mchog 'gran zla dang bral ba kun grol lnga pa bdud 'dul bling pa'i mdun nas dmar khrid
dgongs pa yongs 'dus dang/ khrid yig dmar mo mdzub tshugs rnam kyi smar khrid sogs
zhus/

[C:41] 'gro mgon tshe dbang rig 'dzin gyi rnam rol rgyal sras dam pa tshe dbang 'gyur
med zhabs drung nas a khrid kyi skor nyams khrid du gsan/ bstan pa yongs su rdzogs pa'i
bshes gnyen srid na mtshungs zlas spangs pa'i dka' thub pa chen po sum ldan rig pa 'dzin pa
me ston nyi ma rgyal mtshan gyi mdun nas sdom pa'i gso sbyongs⁸² mdzad/ bcud len gyi
gdams pa zhus/ 'pho ba'i khrid sogs gsan/ rje btsun thugs rje'i dbang phyugs spa ston nyi ma

81 T1 has gyer spungs.

82 T1 has gso spyongs.

'bum gsal gyi zhabs drung nas dran pa tshe sgrub kyi dbang lung/ [T1:27a] phyag rdzogs⁸³
 dbu gsum gyi lta khrid sogs nos/ lung dang rtogs pa'i dpal mda' stag rtse sprul sku rin po che
 g.yung drung dbang rgyal gyi mdun nas bon spyod skor gyi lung/ sems sdom gso sbyongs
 mdzad/ gnas lugs ngo sprod kyi zhal khrid gsan/ me lce gtsug phud gyi rnam rol snyi khog
 rtogs ldan tshul khriims rnam dag gi mdun nas sgrib sbyangs mun sel sgron me'i smin grol kyi
 rim pa/ mi nub mtshan mdo dang sgrub sde skor gyi lung mtha' yas pa gsan/ nyams dang
 rtogs pa'i dbang phyug 'phel zhol bla ma bsod nams rgyal mtshan las/ cho ga bcu gnyis kyi
 dbang/ rnam rgyal gzungs chen/ rigs drug thar mdo sogs kyi lung mang po gsan/ nges pa don
 gyi rnal 'byor zer 'phro rtogs ldan tshul khriims dpal bzang drung nas bai ro gong khug//⁸⁴
 tshe dbang bya ri ma'i dbang lung/

[C:42] las bzhi rgyun lnga'i lung sogs gsan/ [T1:27b] nges gsang rtogs pa'i rnal 'byor 'phel
 zhol rtogs ldan bsod nams dpal bzang mdun nas/ dbal gas las rim gyi sgrub thabs skor gyi
 lung/ mchod gtor rtsis mgo bdun pa sogs gsan/ mkhyen brtse nus pa'i bdag nyid sprul sku nyi
 ma 'od zer drung nas/ rtsa rlung mkha' 'gro'i gsang mdzod kyi smin grol dmar khrid/ dri med
 gzi brjid lung sogs gsan/ thabs lam rtsa rlung la rang dbang 'byor ba khro tshang rtogs ldan
 dga'i bde las snyan rgyud rtsa rlung gsang thur skor kyi lag khrid/ mtshung med thugs rje'i
 mnga' bdag mkhas grub dam pa **rab bla**⁸⁵ rin chen rnam rgyal mdun nas/ klong rgyas kyi
 dbang lung/ mkha' 'gro'i gsang gcod/ dbal chen ge khod/ khro bo dbang chen sogs mang du
 gsan/ smon rgyal dbon sprul rin po che ye shes bstan 'dzin mdun nas gtsug tor gdugs dkar
 mo/ gshed nag rom pa sogs mang du gsan/ [T1:28a] drang srong rig pa 'dzin pa rong rgyab

83 C has rjogs.

84 C omits the 'l'.

85 C has rab la.

bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan mdun nas dran pa yab sras/ dmar khrid dug lnga rang grol/ snyan rgyud bka' rgyud skor bzhi sogs thob/ mkhas pa'i dbang po khro dbon yid bzhin dbang rgyal mdun nas me ri'i dbang lung byams ma'i sgrub skor gyi dbang lung/ dran pa drag po'i skor dbang dang rgyab rten bcas nos/

[C:43] gter chen grub pa'i dbang po gar dbang gsang sngags bling pa'i zhabs drung nas stag la bkra shis gter rdzong skor/ kun grol bla ma rtse gsum skor/ rang gter phal mo che'i dbang lung sogs rgya cher gsan/ smon rgyal gter sras rig 'dzin chen po 'chi med gtsug phud zhal snga nas rdzogs chen yang rtse klong chen/ kun grol lnga pa'i zab gter gsung 'bum sogs bsan/ gter sras dam pa sum ldan rig pa 'dzin pa bstan 'dzin nyi ma bzang po'i zhal snga nas/ rnam rgyal dbang/ [T1:28b] gu ru drag dmar dbang sogs gsan/ dbra sras dam pa 'ja' lus pa chen po zla ba grags pa'i mdun nas/ bon nyid bdal 'bum/ ltag lha spu gri dmar nag skor dang/ char 'bebs skor sogs gsan/ de dag kyang lde tshan du⁸⁶ bsdu na/ bka' drin che ba'i bla ma nyer bzhir bzhugs pa las/ 'dul ba rgyud drug sogs rgyal ba'i dka' dang mchod gtor rtsis mgo bdun pa'i .tiika⁸⁷ sogs bka' rten skor deng sang rgyun bzhugs pa las phal mo che gsan tshul spyi dang/ phyi rgyud mdo chog gi skor/ rnam klong rgyal gsum/ cho ga bcu nyis sogs kyi smin grol dang lung rgyun rnams dang/ nang rgyud gsang sngags kyi skor/ zhi dbang khro gsum/ gsas mkhar mchog lnga sogs kyi smin grol rgyab rten gyi rim pa dang/

[C:44] gsang rgyud rig 'dzin mkha' 'gro'i skor/ rgya bod dran gsum/ li shu stong **rgyung**⁸⁸ thugs rje kun sgrol sogs kyi dbang khrid lung rgyun bzhugs rigs rnams dang/ [T1:29a] yang gsang rdzogs pa chen po'i skor/ a rdzogs snyan gsum sogs kyi smin grol nyams khrid man

86 C has tshan ru.

87 T1 has .tii ka

88 T1 could be stong rgyud.

ngag dang bcas pa dang/ phyis byon sprul sku rnam bzhi nas bzung gar dbang gsang sngags
gling pa yan chad kyi gter gsar gyi skor rnams kyi smin grol gyi rigs phal mo che yang gsan
par mdzad pa yin te/ de'i tshul shin tu mang bas brir ma langs shing/ che long tsam rnam thar
rgyas pa dang/ gsan tho'i pu sta ka logs su bzhugs pa dag las shes 'tsal lo//

bla ma dge ba'i bshes gnyen de dag las dbra zhig grub chen ni rigs kyi bdag po bka' drin
mnyam pa med pa'i⁸⁹ bla ma gcig pur mdzad la/ de dang gter chen tshe dbang grags pa/ gter
stras tshe dbang 'gyur med/ kun grol bdud 'dul gling pa/ sum ldan bsam gtan ye shes lnga ni
'dren mchog⁹⁰ bla ma rnam lnga zhes byin rlabs nyams brgyud kyi bla mar mdzad cing/ de
steng gshen rgyal bstan 'dzin/ [T1:29b] rin chen rnam rgyal bcas la don ston bla ma rnam
bdun zhes rgyun du bsngags brjod kyi yul du mdzad par snang ste/ bla ma de dag gi yon tan
la che chung med mod kyi bka' drin thob tshul gyi ngos nas de ltar bzhag pa'o/

[C:45] de ltar chu gter chen po la chu klung thams cad sdud kyang ngoms pa'i skabs med
pa ltar rje bla ma nyid ring mo nyid nas bon kyi rgya mtsho chen po'i bdag nyid du gyur
kyang da dung yang phyogs kyi bon ste yongs kyi chu klung ji snyed pa rtag du ngoms med
sdud pa'i ngang tshul 'di lta bu ni bstan pa la gces spras kyis skyongs ba'i bstan 'dzin mchog
gi rnam par thar ba ste sku che ba'i yon tan gyi rgyan thams cad kyi gtso bo kho na yin no/

yon tan kun kyi gzhi gyur dge ba'i bshes// mnyes pa gsum gyis tshul bzhin brten pa'i srol//
khyed gcig kho nas dang du blangs pa yis// dpag yas yon tan bye pa'i gter chen brdol// zab
rgyas bon ste smin grol bdud rtsi'i rgyun// rnam gsum dad pa'i mgrin par bskyil⁹¹ ma thag//

89 T1 has med ba'i.

90 C has mtseg.

91 C has bskyel.

[T1:30a] rgyud gsum theg pa rgya mtshor byang chub pa'i// mkhyen rab rtsal chen rdzogs de
khyed min su//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

lnga pa dben pa'i gnas su sgrub pa'i phyag rjes skyongs tshul ni/

[C:46] mdo dri mid las/ she pa'i rgyud grol shes rab tshad sleb nas/ 'jig rten 'du 'dzi
g.yengs pa'i tshogs spang nas/ gcig pur bla med byang chub bsgrub pa'i phyir/ g.yengs ba'i
tshogs spang gcig pur dgon par bsten/ zhes gsung pa ltar smin grol gyi gdams pa ci ltar⁹² gsan
pa rnams ming rkyang tsam du ma song par dben par sgrub pa nyams len gyi sgo nas thugs
nyams su bzhes pa'i tshul cung zad smos pa la gnyis/ dben pa'i brtul zhugs bzung tshul dang/
mdo sngags rdzogs chen gyi nams len bskyangs tshul lo/ dang po ni/

dben pa'i gnas mchog g.yung drung lhun po'i **spor**⁹³// [T1:30b] bsam gtan yan lag drug
dang rjes⁹⁴ mthun par// 'tsho ba dka' thub spyod pa'i ngang tshul gyis// sgrub pa'i rgyal
mtshan btsugs la gsol ba 'debs//

zhes smos te/ snga 'gyur gyi bstan pa rin po chen 'di nyid spyi ldog nas bshad sgrub gnyis
kyi phyag len mchis kyang gtso cher sgrub brgyud byi bka' babs su snang bas/ rje 'gro ba'i
mgon po dam pa rin po che'i rnam thar bzhin du dben pa'i gnas su sgrub pa'i rgyal mtshan
btsugs nas sku tshe gcig tu bya btang gi rnam pa can du bzhugs pa ste/ de'ang rje bla ma nyid
dbang rnon thod rgal ba'i rigs can rang byung gi rnal 'byor du bzhugs pas lam rim rtsol la ltos
mi dgos kyang sgrub brgyud kyi bstan pa'i mig ltos spel pa'i ched du bon gang gsan pa rnams

92 T1 has ji ltar.

93 T1 has sbor.

94 T1 is unclear here.

zhus thob tsam gyis chog par 'dzin pa'i yul lugs ltar ma yin par de don tshul bzhin du bsgrub pa'i thugs bzhed bzang pos/

[C:47] snga rjes kun tu sngon 'gro bsags spyong gi 'bum dgu dang zla dus kyi grangs bsnyen dang/ [T1:31a] sgrub sgor gyi rim pa mang du gnang zhing/ khyad par du dgung grangs sum cu rtse bzhi pa la tshe 'di la skyo shas dang nges 'byung gi blo zol med pa la brten nas ri khrod dben pa'i gnas su 'byon par dgongs pa'i tshe/ shar rdza wer snying mi 'gyur gnas chen g.yung drung lhun po'i ngos su gnas bdag dgyes pa'i dge mtshan dang nyams len 'phel ba'i rten 'brel legs pa shar bzhin der byon nas bya bral byi rnam thar lhur blangs nas bzhugs pa ste/ de yang bsam gtan gyi khang chung lus shong ba'i khor yug tu gnas bcas nas phyi 'jig rten gyi 'du 'dzi dang/ nang rnam rtog gi spros pa thams cad rgyang kyis dor nas gnyen grogs mdza' bshes dang zas nor longs spyod sogs gang la'ang ma gzigs par srog 'tsho tsam gyis zas gos la brten nas dben pa lnga ltan nam bsam gtan gyi yan lag drug dang rjes su mthun par byar med sos dal gyi ngang nas gu yangs blo bde'i nyams bskyangs bzhin lam rim blo sbyangs dang nges gsang snying po'i nyams len la rtse gcig tu brtson pa ste/ [C:48; T1:31b] sgrub brgyud gong ma'i phyag len bzhin du bya bral byi brtul zhugs la gnas nas sku tshe mthar bskyal ba yin no/ gnyis pa ni/

nges 'byung byang chub sems la blo 'byongs shing// rim pa gnyis kyi ting 'dzin⁹⁵ mtha' ru phyin// bla med lam nas gnas lugs mngon du byur// rtogs pa'i bdud rtsi brnyes la gsol ba 'debs//

zhes smos te/ 'di la nang gses su phye na/ mdo las/ gsang rgyud theg chen lta bas spyi khog phubs/ nang rgyud gsang sngags sgom pa'i snying po btsal/ phyi rgyud 'dul khrims

95 C has teng 'dzin.

spyod pas la dor bya/ de gsum zung 'brel bdag gzhan don gnyis 'grub/ ces gsungs pa'i don
 lam la 'jug pa'i go rim bzhin thog mar mdo'i lam rim ltar na/ deng sang gi bon po phal mo che
 za chog po ti 'ga' bslab nas nga thogs grong 'grim tsam don du gnyer ba dang/ 'ga' zhig tshe
 'dir 'dug nyams bde tsam bon yin par re⁹⁶ nas sdod gnas skyid pa/ [T1:32a] bja' btung 'bol ba/
 'khor g.yog 'dzam pa⁹⁷ zhig yid la bcag nas tshe 'di'i cha rkyen gyi bon re tsam byed cing/
 chas gos kyi gzi byin dang/

[C:49] nga rol gyi sgeg chos⁹⁸ dang sha chang gi tshogs 'khor tsam la snying por⁹⁹ 'dzin
 pa mang pa'i stabs kyis/ bon po bya ba lto bcas kyi kha thabs su mthong nas/ tshig bshad gyer
 ba kho na bon yin par¹⁰⁰ blta ba'i dus ngan 'di yang/ rje nyid ni sngon gyi sbyangs¹⁰¹ 'phro
 stobs su gyur pas yul lugs kyi srol ka gang gis kyang ma bslad pa sgrub brgyud bstan pa'i
 bdag po bru zhu spa rme'i dam pa gong ma rnams kyi phyag len khung ma bzhin bshad pa
 bas sgrub pa kho na btso bor mdzad pa dang/ de'ang gsang sngags pa yin rtsis kyis rgyu 'bras
 dang 'gal pa'i kha lta stong pas rang nyid bslu ba rnams kyi rjes su ma 'brangs bar mtshungs
 med dam pa yab sras kyi bka' srol dang mthun¹⁰² par byang chub lam kyi rim pa dang 'brel ba
 gsang sems bla med skor gyi sngon 'gro'i khrid rnams gung sbrel nas dka' spyad snying rus
 kyi sgo nas dpyad sgom gyi nyams len smar ba gnang¹⁰³/ [T1:32b] sgom rim la nges shes
 'drong ba dang sgom bzlas zung 'jug gi sgo nas bsags sbyangs¹⁰⁴ kyi rim pa rnams la yung
 ring por 'grus par mdzad/ khyad par byang chub kyi sems rin po che rnam pa gnyis la nyams

96 C has ri.

97 C has 'jam pa.

98 T1 has 'chos.

99 C has snying po.

100 C has yin pa.

101 T1 has sbyang.

102 C omits mthun.

103 C has dang.

104 T1 has sbyongs.

len kyi mthil btsol¹⁰⁵ nas blo sbyangs kho na la rtsal 'don du gnang bas bdag 'dzin dang gces
'dzin gyi snyems rtog rtsad nas chod pas nga khyod¹⁰⁶ kyi phogs zhen gtan nas zad/

[C:50] stong nyid dang snying rje zung 'jug gi nyams len gyi gzhung bsrang bas skyes bu
chen po'i lam gnad la blo gting nas 'byongs te rkyen ngan lam du khyer pa'i brtul zhugs
mngon tshan can rang gshis su rdol nas 'brel tshad don ldan gyi thugs bskyed rmad du byung
ba mnga' bas rgyal sras sems dpa' chen po zhes pa'i mtshan chags/ deng sang gi bar du bon
gyi snying po byang chub kyi sems la blo sbyongs bgyid pa'i phag ris 'di tsam yang rje bla
ma'i bka' drin kho na las byung pa yin par shes 'tshal lo/ [T1:33a] gnyis pa sngags sems
bskyed rdzogs kyi lam rim ltar na/ dbang gi rgyud smin nas grol byed khrid kyi nyams len la
bsnyen sgrub spyi dang/ khyad par thun bzhi'i nral 'byor gyi khongs su dril nas bskyed rim
lha'i 'khor lo la bsten nas phyag rgya gcig spros kyi ting 'dzin bsgom pas lus sgrib sbyongs/
gdan gsum lha ru dag pa'i nye lam bum dbang gi nyams len gyis snang ba thams cad gdod
nas dag pa rab 'byams sgyu 'phrul lha'i phyag rgyas mi phyed par bcing ba'i brtan pa thob par
mdzad/ rgyud sde phyi nang gi lhag pa'i lha du ma dang/ khad par nang rgyud skor gyi rtsa
gsum bon skyongs phal che par dus grangs mtshan ma'i bsnyen pa gsum ci rigs pa ma song
ba med pa lta bu dang/ kun bzang zhi ba dang/ bla ma dran pa dang tshe dbang gi skor/

[C:51] dbal phur nag po sogs la bsnyen sgrub lan man po bskyal mar mdzad cing/
[T1:33b] de dag gi bzlas pa'i grangs las bzhi 'gyur las lhag pa'i 'phar ma gnang ba mang pa
dang/ sa le 'od dung phyur lhag/ gshan dran pa yab sras/ dbal gsas/ ge khod/ stag lha/ spyi
'dul sogs la bsnyen ba bye ba du ma dang/ zhal 'don rigs kyang/ byams ma/ ltung bshags/
bsam lhun sogs khri ru longs pa dang/ bru'i gzungs bsgrigs 'bum du longs pa sogs bzlas pa

105 C has bcot.

106 C has da khyod.

sngags kyi 'khor lo la brten nas ngag sgrib sbyangs/ sgra grags sngags su rdzogs pa'i gsang dbang gi nyams len gyis g.yo ba rlung gi byed las la brden pa'i phyi nang 'byung pa'i sgra skad thams cad grags stong g.yung drung gi gdangs su 'pho bar mdzad/ rdzogs rim thabs kyi nye lam rtsa rlung tsa.n.da lii¹⁰⁷ nyams len yan lag dang bcas mtshan bcas thabs kyi nyams len la lo du mar thugs brtson gnang nas sems nyid ye shes kyi 'khor lor brten nas yid sgrib sbyangs/ [T1:34a] rlung sems zung 'jug gi sgo nas sher dbang gi nyams len gyis zhu bde dga' bzhi'i ye shes kyi dgongs pa zab mo la rang byan tshud par mdzad/ mtshan med don gyi 'od gsal lhan skyes ye shes kyi 'khor lo la brten nas shes sgrib sbyangs/ phyag rgya chen po'i lta sgom tshig dbang gi nyams len gyis gnas lugs don gyi ye shes rtsal du bton nas nyams su len par mdzad pa ste/ de ltar rgyud dang grub pa'i phyag len dang mi 'gal zhing/

[C:52] zhang bod mkhas pa'i bka' srol dang rjes su mthun pa'i gsang sems snying po'i nyams len gyi zab khrid la brten nas sgrub brgyud gong ma'i rjes shul¹⁰⁸ bskyangs pas dngos grub rnams gnyis kyi dpal la cir yang spyod pa'i grub pa'i rig 'dzin mchog gi go 'phang la nye bar bzhugs pa'o//

gsum pa bla med theg pa'i lam rim ltar na/ skyabs gnas kun 'dus kyi ngo bo drin chen rtsa ba'i bla ma la blo gtad rtse gcig pa'i mos gus kyis thugs rgyud lhongs par byas nas/ [T1:34b] ka dag khregs chod kyi lam rim gyis sems las 'das pa'i rig pa rnal ma rkyang ded du lam du byas nas bsgom pas lta thog nas sgom pa shar te nyin mtshan chu po'i rgyun gyi rnal 'byor la brten nas kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa mngon du gyur te gdod ma'i grub mtha' snyogs par mdzad/ lhung grub 'od gsal gyi rang mdangs mngon sum lam byed thod rgal gyi lam rim rgyud don zhe gnyis kyi gnad rnams ji bzhin nyams su blangs pas tshe 'di nas sku bzhi'i rgyal

107 T1 has tsa.n.da li'i

108 C has rjes la

sa la mnga' dbang 'byor pa'i lam rtags tshad du 'khyol ba'i nges pa don gyi rnal 'byor pa chen po ste/ lam gyi rim pa dang mthun pa'i nyams rtogs yon tan gyi rtsal yongs su rdzogs pas rtogs ldan gangs kyi seng ge bzhin du gang la'ang 'jigs pa dang bral ba'i 'jigs med dpa' bo'i go 'phang la brjid chags su bzhugs pa'o//

[C:53] 'khor ba'i phun tshogs ji snyed blos btang nas// 'dab chags mkha' la rgyu ba'i ngang tshul gyis// [T1:35a] dben pa'i gnas mchog sman ljongs nyams dga' bar//¹⁰⁹ gang ba'i zla ba bzhin du rnam par mdzes// nyin mtshan thar pa don gnyer nges 'byung blo// gzhan don khur chen 'debs pa'i snying stobs sems// mthar 'dzin ri bo gzhi ba'i¹¹⁰ yang dag lta// de dag 'gran pa bzhin du khyod la 'phel// thabs mchog bskyed pas yul gsum mngon byur cing// shes rab rdzogs pas rlung sems las rung bas// las dang grub pa'i dpal la dbang 'byor ba'i// ngo mtshar dbyar gyi chu bor 'khu ba bzhin// ka dag lam byed khregs chod lta ba dang// lhun grub lam byed thod rgal sgom pa yis//

[C:54] rig stong rjen pa¹¹¹ lhongs su¹¹² ngoms pa'i gzis// sku bzhi'i rgyal sa mchog la dbang¹¹³ min nam//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

drug pa de la brten nas bstan 'gro'i don mdzad pa'i tshul ni/ de ltar sgrub pa nyams len gyis gzhi brling bar byas nas kyang/ [T1:35b] dri med las/ thabs dang thugs rje zung 'brel byis// 'gro ba'i don la rnam dgongs shing/ mkhyen dang brtse ba'i thugs ldan pa/ bslab pa chen po yin par bshad/ ces gsungs pa ltar bstan pa dang sems can gyi don la yongs su gzigs

109 T1, the r in bar is illegible.

110 C has gzhal ba'i

111 C is difficult to read, may be the same, but vowel and superscripted r are not legible.

112 C has stongs su

113 C has **dpang**

pa ni skyes bu dam pa rnams kyi las su bya ba'i gtso bo yin pas/ de'i tshul cung zad smos pa
la gnyis/ bshad sgrub kyi ring lugs skyongs tshul/ smin grol gyi rgyun rgya cher spel tshul
lo//

dang po ni/

snyigs ma'i dus 'dir rgyal bstan gzhir bszengs su// gdong ba'i thugs bskyed skya **rengs**¹¹⁴
kyis drangs pa'i// bshad dang sgrub pa'i phing las nyi ma'i¹¹⁵ gzis// rgyal bstan pad tshal
bzhad la bsol ba 'debs//

[C:55] zhes smos te/ phan bde mtha' dag gi 'byung gnas ni rgyal ba'i bstan pa yin la/ de
nyid yun ring du gnas pa dang spel ba'i thabs ni bshad sgrub gnyis la rag las/ [T1:36a] bshad
sgrub kyi bya ba gang na yod pa der rgyal ba'i bstan pa rin po che bzhugs pa yin pas de'i tshul
la dgongs nas sku gzhon pa'i dus nas sku gshegs pa la nye ba'i bar bstan pa la gcig tu sman
pa'i thugs bzhed kho nas/ phyogs kyi dad 'dus byung rigs kun la thog mar 'chad nyan la rtsal
'don mdzad pas slob gnyer gyi sgor bcug nas/ dam pa yab sras kyi ring lugs lam rim sum
brgya pas gzhi byas pa'i/ bon 'khor tshigs bzi'i .tii ka/ 'dul ba kun btus dang mdor btus/ dbu
ma bden gnyis te bka' rten sde lnga la 'chad nyan gyi gzhi mdzad nas/ mnyam med chen po'i
gzhung/ dbu ma/ phar phyin/ 'dul ba/ srid pa'i mdzod/ tshad ma bcas 'phrul sgron rnam pa
lngas zur brgyan nas gnang/ gsang sngags phyogs la/ rtsa rgyud rin chen kun 'dus/ gsang don
rnam 'byed/ khro bo dbang chen/ [T1:36b] ma rgyud sangs rgyas rgyud gsum/ rdzogs pa chen
po ye khri mtha' sel skor 'chad spel ci rigs gnang/ khad par rang gzhung la/ bstan pa rin po
che'i 'byung khungs legs bshad rin po che'i mdzod/ mdo sngags bla med dang bcas pa'i lam
gyi rim pa'i gzhung sde snod rin po che'i mdzod/

114 T1 has **rings**

115 T1 has nyi mi'i

[C:56] thegs pa thams cad kyi grub mtha'i gnas gsal bar¹¹⁶ ston pa lung rigs rin po che'i mdzod/ bla med theg pa'i gzhi lam 'bras gsum rgya cher gsal ba dbying rig rin po che'i mdzod/ mdzod chen bzhi la bshad rgyun bskyangs pas grub mtha' rkang tshugs pa'i slob gnyer ba mang du tshar bas bstan pa gzhir bzhengs su slong ba'i bdag rkyen bla na med par mdzad/ bshad don sgrub pa'i lag len la/ byang chub lam rim chen mo dang bru'i¹¹⁷ a khrid chen mo la sngon 'gro bka' lung rgya mtsho dang rgyab skyor bcas sbrel nas sngon 'gro bsags sbyong¹¹⁸ gi rgyun spel/ khrid gzhung dang rgyab skyor spel nas dngos gzhi dang 'pho ba bcas chad med gnang/ snyan brgyud bka' rgyud skor bzhi bru'i phyag len dang/ [T1:37a] yang rtse klong chen gter gzhung ltar smar khrid du gnang ba dang/ gzhan yang rdzogs chen nam mkha' spyi gcod/ tshe dbang bod yul ma'i khrid/ kun grol gyi dmar mo mdzub¹¹⁹ tshugs/ dgons pa yongs 'dus/ phyag rdzogs dbu gsum sogs dang/ gzhan yang mkha' 'gro'i gsang gcod/ ma rgyud thugs rje nyi ma'i khrid sogs khrid chen skor rnam gtso bor¹²⁰ mdzad/ khyad par gsang ba sems phyogs skor gyi yang bcud a khrid chen mo'i ring brgyud/ gsang bdag rtse gsum skor gyi nye brgyud bcas gung sbrel nas/ phyag rdzogs zung 'jug gi bka' babs chu bo gcig 'dres rdzogs chen sku gsum rang shar gyi bon sde rgya cher spel ba'i khrid rgyun rang rkang du btsugs pa dang/

[C:57] rdzogs chen bla med theg pa sde gsum snying po'i dgongs bcud yang zab nam mkha'i mdzod chen gyi mtshan gzhi rigs lnga bde gshegs 'dus pa'i sgrub thabs kyi gdams pa

116 C has gsal par

117 T1 has bu'i

118 C has spyong

119 T1 has 'dzub

120 C has gtso por

kun tu bzang po'i snying thig gi khrid rgyun bla lhag tu spel bas gdul bya rnams la byin rlabs
kyis pha phog tu gyur pa'i bka' drin gzhal du med pas mtshon/

[T1:37b] khrid rgyun rigs ji snyed pa'i rgyun spel pas sgrub brgyud kyi bstan pa'i ming
snyan don gyi lci bar mdzad pas/ deng sang tsam na zhwa dkar ba'i grub mtha' 'dzin pa rnams
bon gyis mtho ba'i rkang stegs la gnas 'cha' ba'i skabs rnyed cing stobs 'byor gyi dpung pa
dang log 'dod kyi snyan grags la brten nas snyems byed kyi rtog pa skra rtser son nas mgo bo
sgril chog pa de lta bu med mod kyi/ sgrub pa nyams len gyi bdud rtsis rtogs pa'i lus zungs
'tsho bas sa lam gyi lang tsho cir yang dar bzhin pa'i gnas skabs 'di lta bu rje bla ma bka' drin
can gyi thugs bskyed kho na las byung ba yin no/

gnyis pa smin grol kyi rgyun rgya cher spel tshul ni/ spyir rig pa'i gnas dang bstan pa'i
bon gnyis las/ rje nyid nges don sgrub brgyud¹²¹ kyi bstan pa'i bdag por gnang bas thun mon
rig gnas skor la 'chad spel gnang ba med mod/

[C:58; T1:38a] bstan pa'i snying po 'phrul ngag bden pa'i smin grol lung rgyun bcas
phyogs med du spel nas dus kyi mthar yang bstan pa'i rgyun gnas pa'i dgongs bzhed kyis/
bstan pa 'dzin pa'i bshes gnyen chen po rnams nas bzung/ mchog dang bar ma dang dman pa'i
gdul bya rnams la nam yang sku ngal la mi gzigs shing skyo dub med par bon sbyin phyogs
med du gnang ba ste/ rje nyid kyi bla mar gyur kyang lung zin brgyud 'dzin gyi slob ma'i
mchog tu gyur pa sprul pa'i gter chen 'chi med 'gro 'dul gar dbang bstan gnyis gsang sngags
gling pa la gsas mkhar mchog lnga'i dbang dang/ a khrid kyi smin khrid dang/ kun bzang
snying thig gi khrid kyis mtshon/ gdan sa ba rgyal tshab dam pa rje drung rin po che mkhyen
brtse nus pa'i bdag nyid mtshungs med blo gros rgya mtsho/ thugs kyi sras gcig dba sras

121 C has bsgyud

dam pa nges pa don gyi rnal 'byor ba 'ja' lus ba chen po 'gran bral zla ba drags pa/ [T1:38b] a
 mdo rnga ljongs¹²² bkra shis 'khyil gyi mchog sprul mkhan chen dam pa mkhas shing grub
 pa'i dbang po tshul khrims bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan/ bya btang mchog sprul rig 'dzin dbang
 phyug tshe dbang 'gyur med byang chub rdo rje rtsal/ dbra sprul grub pa'i dbang phyug mkha'
 spyod pa chen po skal bzang bstan pa'i nyi ma/ kun grol drug pa gter chen rig 'dzin chen po
 hum chen 'gro 'dul gling pa/

[C:59] kho bo seng gsob 'dzin pa'i nor skyongs rgan bo yan chad snga 'gyur zhwa dkar
 bstan pa'i ring lugs 'chang ba'i bshes gnyen phal mo che/ gzhan yang kun grol lnga pa'i gdung
 sras dam pa bstan 'dzin nyi ma bzang po/ rtogs pa thod rgal du brnyes pa'i 'khrul zhig sems
 dpa' chen po rab bla lha mgon/ nyams dang rtogs pa'i dbang phyug khro sprul g.yung drung
 mthong grol/ [T1:39a] thugs sras dam pa shes rab mchog ldan/ rnal 'byor tshul khrims dbang
 phyug/ lhag sprul theg mchog phrin las/ lchang sprul bstan 'dzin dbang rgyal/ rin spungs
 mchog sprul shes rab rnam rgyal/ mda' chen mchog sprul rnam gnyis/ hre sprul tshul khrims
 rgyal mtshan/ khro dbon dam pa yid bzhin dbang rgyal/ nyag shod mchog sprul g.yung drung
 tshul khrims bstan 'dzin dbang po/ bya btang mchog sprul g.yung drung bstan pa'i nyi ma/
 drang srong dge ba'i bshes gnyen tshul khrims mchog rgyal/ gshen btsun tshul khrims dbang
 rgyal/ bal po'i bla ma kun spang pa chen po bstan 'dzin tshul khrims/ dbra dbon rnam rgyal
 grags pa/ drang srong seng ge nyi ma/ thar bde bla ma tshul khrims dri med/ khyung nag
 mkhan po tshul khrims phun tshogs/ skyang dbon bstan 'dzin rin chen/ bkra shis 'khyil kyi
 mkhan po rnam gnyis/ khro chen nang so tshe dbang nor 'dzin/

122 T1 has a mdo [only]; C has rnga ljongs [only].

[C:60] re kang bla ma mthar phyin/ [T1: 39b] rtse¹²³ drug mtshams pa¹²⁴ rnam dag don
ldan/ rgya khri ka'i bla ma tshul khrims g.yung drung/ khung dbon dam pa yab sras sogs rgya
bod bal gsum gyi sa'i char gtogs pa'i bon ban dgon sde bla khag che phra'i bla ma bla chen ci
rigs/ rgya bod kyi mi chen che khag/ khro chen rgyal po/ brag steng rgyal po/ dge bshes rgyal
po/ gling tshang rgyal po sogs so so'i dad 'dus ji snyed rnam la/ mdo sngags rdzogs chen
dang 'brel ba'i bshad bka'/ dbang dang rjes gngang/ khrid rim bklag lung yan chad so so'i 'dod
pa dang mthun par phyogs dang ris med par spel/ rje nyid kyis gsungs pa rnam las tshar re
ma gsungs pa med cing/ phal cher tshar grangs mang po dang/ rgya pod dran gsum/ mchog
lga/ gsang bdag dang bde 'dus kyi smin grol skor ni ha cang tshar grangs mang bo dang/
sngon 'gro dang dngos gzhi'i skor ni slob ma re bzhin tshar re mthar chags su gngang ba dang/
[T1:40] gzhan yang 'dul ba la rab tu byung pa dang/ drang srong gi sdom pa¹²⁵ gngang ba ni
stong phrag tu longs pa dang/ sems dpa'i sdom pa gngang ba ni grangs las¹²⁶ 'das so/ phyis su
khams phyogs kyi skye bo phal mo che zhal mjal zhu par 'ong ba¹²⁷ rnam la'ang/ skyabs 'gro
dang/ tshe dbang/ gson 'pho dang/ snying po'i bzlas lung gis mtshon pa'i chos 'brel mos pa
dang mtshams par khor yug tu gnad bas 'brel thogs tsam gyi dbang du byas na khri phrag du
ma las kyang brgal bas/

[C:61] 'phrul ngag bden pa'i bon sgra phyogs kun tu khyab cing 'brel tshad don ldan du
mdzad pa yin te/ mdor na smin grol gyi gdam pa gang 'dod kyang ma gngang bar phyir ldog

123 C has rtsi

124 C has 'tsham pa; T1 has mtsham pa

125 T1 has sngom pa

126 C omits las

127 C omits 'ong ba

mdzad pa ni gcig kyang med la/ slob ma rnams kyang gang gi 'du ba¹²⁸ la gegs med cing ji
 ltar bzhed pa ltar mthar phyin par 'byur bas gangs can du 'chad nyan gyi rgyud yun rin par
 mdzad pa gzhan ma byung ba tsam du gda' zhin/ [T1:40b] mkhas pa 'ga' zhig 'chad nyan la
 g.yengs nas sgrub pa la g.yel ba¹²⁹ dang/ kha cig 'chad nyan bshol nas sgrub pa la gzhol ba¹³⁰
 mang yang/ gtso cher¹³¹ 'chad nyan gyi ngang nas grub pa'i yon tan yang ches cher ngoms par
 mdzad pa ni bdag nyid chen po 'di nyid tsam du zad do/ de dag gi shugs kyis slob brgyud ji
 ltar byung ba dang spyin bdag sogs kyang mtshon nus pas shes par bya'o//

legs bshad lung gi pad tshal bzhad pa dang// tshul bzhin sgrub pa'i ge sar¹³² rab rgyas
 pas// mngon rtogs zil dngar 'bebs pa'i phrin las rgyun//

[C:62] snyigs dus bstan dang 'gro ba'i gsos su smin// yongs rdzogs bka' gter smin grol
 bdud rtsi'i rgyun// ris med gdul bya'i tshal du legs drangs pas// rjes su slob pa'i skal bzang
 udpala phreng// yangs pa'i¹³³ sa chen mdzes pa'i rgyan du 'phel//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshags su bcad pa'o//

[T1:41a] bdun pa bstan pa rjes bzhag gi phrin las spel tshul ni/ mdo las/ bstan pa'i don la
 rnam pa gsum yin te/ 'dzin dang skyongs dang spel dang rnam pa gsum/ de dag thabs la rnam
 pa gsum yin te/ sku gdung sku gzungs gsung rab bzhengs pa'o/ zhes gsungs pa ltar/ gdul bya
 ma 'ongs pa rnams kyi don du bstan pa'i rgyun yun ring du gnas pa'i rten ni bstan pa rjes su
 bzhag pa'i phrin las yin la/ de nyid bya ba las kyi 'khor lo dang rjes su 'brel bar 'byung bas

128 C has 'du pa

129 C has g.yel pa

130 C has gzhol pa

131 T1 has gtsor cher

132 C has gi sar

133 T1 has yongs pa'i

de'i tshul cung zad smos pa la gnyis/ rten rjes su bzhag tshul dang/ brten pa sgrub sde spel
tshul lo/ dang po¹³⁴ ni/

rgyal bstan rin chen yun ring gnas pa'i rten// gdul bya'i bsod nams zhing du spel ba'i slad//

[C:63] sku gsung thugs kyi rten mchog mtha' yas pas// 'brel tshad don ldan mdzad la gsol
ba 'debs// zhes smos te/ [T1:41b] rje¹³⁵ bla ma 'di ni sku tshe ril por rang don gyi nyams len
dang gzhan don bstan 'gro'i bya ba la gzigs pa kho na ma gtogs 'dod zhen byis grong chog
gson gshin gyi dkor rjes su ched du gtad nas phebs bzhud mdzad ma myong zhin dman pa'i
brtul zhugs lhur bzhes pas thob 'jal¹³⁶ gyis longs spyod tshol ba sogs gtan nas mi mnga bas
bya bral kun spangs kho na'i tshul du bzhugs kyang sngon gyi thugs bskyed dang bsod nams
kyis mthus ji ltar mkho ba'i 'dod rgu thams cad 'bad med du 'byung bas longs spyod¹³⁷ kyi
dngos po char babs pa de dag gnas min du cung zad kyang chud zos su mi **gtong bar**¹³⁸ rten
gsum dang mchod sbyin gyi ched du phongs med¹³⁹ du gtong bar mdzad pas de dag zhib par
smos kyis mi langs kyang/ gtso che ba tsam rags par smos na/ thog mar rang gi rtsa ba'i bla
ma sa skyongs dbra pa grub chen gyi gdan sa shar rdza sten chen dgon 'chi med mdo sngags
g.yung drung bstan rgyas gling lha khang gsar bskrun gyi mgo lung zhabs 'degs¹⁴⁰ gnang nas/
[T1:42a] gtsang khang byams pa lha khang du gtso bo byams ldan dang/ rnam rgyal/ byams
ma dang gsum thog brtegs gnyis re/¹⁴¹

134 T1 has dang bo

135 T1 has nge

136 T1 and C both have thob mjal

137 T1 has longs sbyod

138 C has **gtong ba**

139 C has phangs med

140 T1 has zhabs 'debs

141 C has gnyis ri

[C:64] de nas gto rgyal ye mkhyen/ khri gtsug rgyal ba/ gshen lha 'od dkar/ sang po 'bum khrid¹⁴² bcas thog brtsegs re dang/ byams 'khor brgyad sku tshad re bcas sku rgyu 'dag bse dang sman 'dam las bzhengs te/ phyag len khung ma las byung ba bzhin nang gzhug bum gta' dang gzungs 'bul glegs bam rigs/ bde gling pa'i gter byon dam rdzas brgya rtsa sogs 'jig rten na dkon pa'i rten rnams kyis phyur bur¹⁴³ gtams te tshon gser sogs rgyu 'gro la ma gzigs par bsgrub pas bstan 'gror sman pa'i rtags su khyad 'phags lnga'i ngo mtshar dang bcas/ rten dang mchod rdzas kyis yo byad dang bcas pa'i thebs bzhag rgya dngul rdil tshad bzhi bcu lhag pa'i dngos rdzas kyis dgon gzhir zhabs 'deggs kyis thugs bzhes gnang ba dang/ dben gnas bde chen ri khrod du ring mo nas stan chags su bzhugs pas phyis nas slob ma'i 'du ba rnams kyang der bskyongs pas sgrubs sde chen po zhig chags kyang/ gter chen gsang sngags gling pa'i zhal snga nas phyis 'byung gi ched du dge thang zhes pa'i sa gnas su sgrub sde'i sgom¹⁴⁴ grwa btab na rtags mtshan dge ba'i lung bstan ltar sa gnas der sgrub khang gsar du bzhengs shing/ sgrub sde chen po dge thang padma¹⁴⁵ rgyas pa'i skyes tshal zhes pa'i mtshan gsol/ phyogs med kyid dad 'dus rnams la spang ba'i khang ba ci rigs pa bzo bar rjes su gnang/

[C:65] der sku rten du rje rnam par rgyal ba'i sku gzugs thog brtsegs can za drug gyi brgyan pa 'khor mgon chen brgyad dang/ [T1:43a] byams ma gtso bo thog brtsegs 'khor bcu bdun/ rtogs ldan a tog dkar po'i gter byon kun bzang rgyal ba 'dus pa'i sku khru tshad rgyan drug can gtsos zhi lha bzhi bcu rnams dang/ ltung bshags gtso bo gshen lha mda' tsad la 'khor sangs rgyas so bzhi mtho tshad sogs gser zangs las¹⁴⁶ bsgrun pa'i sku rten brgya phrag zung

142 T1 has 'bum khring

143 C has byur bur

144 T1 has sgrom

145 C has pamda

146 C has lan

las brgal ba dang/ thang sku khyad thon du bzhengs pa'i mdzad bcu sogs 'dod lha'i rigs sum cu skor/ tsag 'bum yongs rdzogs/ gsung rten la rje nyid kyi zhal gsungs skor pod chen bcu gsum gtsos glegs bam mang po par du bsgrubs shing/ bka' dang bka' rten gyi skor gsung rab pod¹⁴⁷ sum brgya sum cu lhag dang/ ma tri dang man .ni dung re 'gro nges 'khor chen lnga sogs dngos rdzas kyi steng nas bsgrub pa dang/ thugs rten du sku gdung cha brgyad sogs mang du bzhengs bas mtshon rten gsum bzhengs nas gzhan la gnang ba sogs re re nas smos kyis mi langs bas de tsam mo/ [T1:43b] bla ma dang dge 'dun la bsnyen bkur mdzad pa'ang rje nyid kyi bon sde zhus pa'i bla ma snga phyi kun gyi zhal sngar thog mar zhu rten kyi me tog dang/

[C:66] mjug bka' drin gtong rag gi mchod sprin spus nam gang ldan spras te phul ba dang/ bla ma'i gdan sa steng chen du dbyar gnas pa'i tshogs thebs su rdil tshad drug/ mtshan brjod thebs rdil tshad gnyis/ mar me'i thebs rdil tshad phyed gsum gnang ba sogs sde dge nas a mdo yan chad phyogs kyi dgon sde che phra du ma la zhig gsos dang 'tshogs thebs kyi zhal 'debs ched gnang sbyin¹⁴⁸ dngos ja stong las lhag pa dang/ dben pa'i rir dge sbyor¹⁴⁹ la gnas pa mang po la 'tsho chas spyar ba dang/ 'dus sde rnams su gzungs sngags dang bsngo zhus gnang ba tshun chad bon dang mthun pa'i phyag len gtsang ma 'di lta bu sku nyams su bstar ba'i tshul 'di tsam yang rna ba'i¹⁵⁰ bcud du gyur ba'o/ [T1:44a] dus dang rgyun gyi mchod pa khor yug tu gnang ba'i tshul yang/ gzims skyil lha khang phyi nang du dus dang rgyun 'bar gyi¹⁵¹ mar me/ sbyar¹⁵² spos rgyun btul/ me tog gi rigs/ gtsang tshan ting phor cha grangs/ lha

147 C and T1 have bod

148 C and T1 have gnang spyin

149 C has dge spyor

150 C has rna pa'i

151 C omits gyi

sangs bcas mchod pa gtsang spras¹⁵³ thon pa dang/ ma.n.dala bcas/ chab gtor dang me gsur dang 'brel bar bstan 'bro spyi'i don du glud bsngo'i rigs sogs gnyug mar skyongs ba'i mchod sbyin dang/ yar mar gyi tshes bcu la tshogs mchod gang rgyas dang/ zla dus kyi dus chen rnams la mar me brgya rtsa sogs mchod sprin gyi bkod pa gtsang legs bstar chags su gnang ba dang/

[C:67] long sprang mang bya khi yan chad la gang mtshams kyi zas gos sogs gtong ba nam mkha' mdzod kyi sgo chen rab tu phye bas tshogs gsog pa'i thabs la gcig tu rtson pa 'di tsam yang rgyu 'bras kyi rten 'brel la thugs nges 'drongs pa'i rnam thar du snang bas ngo mtshar skyed par rigs so/ [T1:44b]

gnysis pa ni/ 'chad nyan lung gi rba rlabs rab g.yo zhing// nges gsang rtogs pa'i nor bus yongs gtams pa'i// mdo sngags sgrub sde'i mtsho chen legs bskyil bas// bstan pa rjes bzhang mdzad la gsol ba 'debs// zhes smos te/ ring mo'i dus nas mdo sngags bla med dang bcas pa'i nyams len gyi rgyun 'phel bar re ba'i thugs bzhed kyis sku tshe ji srid du lo re bzhin snying po'i nyams len don du gnyer pa bcu phrag du ma chad¹⁵⁴ med du byung ba rnams sgoms sgrub kyi khrigs su btsud pas de'i rgyun gyis phyogs med kyi ri'i sul dang/ dgon gnas kyi 'dus sde rnams su sgom grwa ba gong 'phel dud song nas/ deng sang tsam na sgrub brtson rnal 'byor ba'i sde ches mang ba mchis pa mtha' dag rje bla ma'i thugs bskyed las byung pa kho na yin la/ khyad par shar rdza g.yung drung lhun por dge thang padma¹⁵⁵ rgyas pa'i skyed tshal gsar 'debs mdzad par/

152 C has spyar

153 T1 has sbras

154 T1 has du mchad

155 C has pamda

[C:68; T1:45a] gdan sa ba dbon blo gros rgya mtsho la mnga' gsol gyi gzings bstod dang bka' bkod kyi 'gan bzhes gnang nas lo bstar du¹⁵⁶ smin grol rgyab rten rigs 'chad spel dang/ zab khrid sngar mus rigs kyi khrid rgyun dang/ de dag gi sgom sgrub kyi phyag srol la brten nas grwa sde bskyangs pa dang/ lo dus kyi sgrub mchod dang zla dus kyi dus mchod sogs bstan 'gro la phan nges pa'i zhal bkod lung gnas tshul mthun gyi phyag srol legs par stsal ba'i sgo nas bstan pa rin po che dar rgyas 'phel ba'i phrin las rlabs po che'i bdag rkyen mchog tu gyur pa dang/ de mtshungs a mdo rnga ljongs su thugs sras dam pa tshul khrim bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan la lung phog nas khrid rgyun dang sgom grwa gsar 'dzugs kyi gzhi bting mdzad nas deng sang yang bstan pa je 'phel du bzhugs pa dang/ [T1:45b] sprul pa'i gter chen gsang sngags gling pa dang slob 'bangs **kyi na pa**¹⁵⁷ rang la'ang de lta bu'i 'gan bzhes stsal nas dbal ri ri nag 'joms pa g.yung drung gsang ba gnam lcags yang rdzong gi sgrub sde byang chub ljon pa'i skyed tshal gsar btab kyis mtshon sgrub brgyud kyi nyams len phyogs kun tu 'phel ba'i bka' drin gnang ba ste/ dus kyi mthar yang gshen bstan rin po che nub med yun du gnas pa'i btsas su 'gyur ba'i phrin las khyad par du gyur pa nyid do/

[C:69] de ltar rje bla ma'i ring lugs 'chang ba rnams kyi phyag rjes kyi che ba'ang/ slob dpon dran pa'i zhal nas/ gsang rgyud theg chen lta bas spyi khog phub/ nang rgyud gsang sngags sgom pa'i snying po btsal/ phyi rgyud 'dul khrims spyod pas la dor bya/ de gsum zhung 'grel bdag gzhan don gnyis 'grub/ zhes gsung pa'i don bzhin spyod pa 'dul ba dang mthun par kun spyod gtsang zhin las 'bras phra mo la'ang 'dzem par byed pas 'stan pa'i mdzes rgyan du gyur pa dang/ [T1:46a] sgom pa gsang sngag dang mthun par bsnyen sgrub lhur len cing bskyed rdzogs kyi don dang ldan pas grub gnyis kyi gzi byin mtho ba dang/ lta ba bla

156 C has ltar du

157 T1 appears to have **gyin ba**; or perhaps **gyi na ba**.

med dang mthun par nyams len kyi rgyun bskyang zhing blo 'das kyi rig pa lam du byed bas
gdod ma'i gtan srid zin pa ste lta sgom spyod gsum gyi gzhung lam bzang ba'i khyad par
dang/ lung don bshad pa dang 'brel bas thos bsam kyi sgro 'dogs chod cing blun sgom kyi gol
sa chod pa dang/ sgrub brgyud kyi babs so dang 'brel bas bstan don rgyud la smin cing sa lam
gyi rtogs pa rnyed pa dang/ phrin las rjes bzhag dang 'brel bas bstan pa'i gzhi tshugs shing
lam srol gyi khrigs su tshud pa ste bshad sgrub las gsum gyi phyag len dang 'grel ba'i khyad
par dang ldan pa ste/

[C:70] dus dang rnam pa thams cad du bstan 'gro'i don 'ba' zhid thugs kyi steng na lci ye
re yod pa'i stobs kyis rang gzhan dang bstan pa la phan pa'i mdzad spyod kho nas dus 'da' bar
byed pa ste/ [T1: 46b] tshul de lta bu dang ldan pa'i gshen sde'i tshogs je bas je 'phel gyur nas
rje bla ma'i ring lugs bstan pa ji srid kyi bar du dbyar mtsho bzhin du 'phel zhing rgyas pa'i
rten 'byung gi dge mtshan phyogs kun tu khyab par gyur to/

bsod nams rlabs chen spel ba'i gzhi gcig bu// sku gsung thugs kyi rten mchog khyad par
can// yul gyi bcud du bskrun pa'i mod nyid nas// snod bcud dge mtshan rgyas pa'i ngo mtshar
'phel// lung gis bsngags pa'i nor 'dzin grub pa'i gzhir// 'phrul ngag bden pa'i 'dun sa legs
bsgrub nas// nges don bstan pa'i mtsho chen bskyil ba'i mthus// gdul bya ngang mo 'du ba'i
gnas su gyur//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

brgyad pa sku che ba'i yon tan gzhan smos pa ni/ 'phags chen dam pa rnams ni gang du
skye ba bzung yang dam pa'i ngang tshul gyi yon tan nyi ma'i zer bzhin rang chas su mnga'

ba yin pas de'i tshul gtso bsdus kyi dbang du byas nas gong du smos zin kyang¹⁵⁸ 'dir ni skyes
stobs kyi rigs kyi che ba gzhan 'phros don gyi tshul du smos pa la gnyis/

[C:71; T1:47a] thugs rgyud gshis kyi rang bzhin/ 'phags chen gyi ngang tshul gzhan smos
pa'o/ dang po ni/

thugs sgam tshig btsun gzu po'i ngang tshul can// bltar snang kha 'dzin tshe 'di'i 'khri pa
zad// kun dang mi 'gal kun las ches lhag pa'i// spyod tshul rnam par dag la gsol ba 'debs//

zhes smos te/ dam pa nyid ya rabs drwa ma'i¹⁵⁹ rgyud du bltams pas thugs kyi gting sgam
zhing snyan khung ha cang 'thug pas ngo dga'i phye gtor dang dga' mi dga'i chags sdang gi
ngan g.yo sogs la nam yang mi gsan pas dus kun tu thugs rnal mar gnas shing/ mdzad pa che
phra gang la'ang thugs la nges shes 'drong ba¹⁶⁰ zhig byung tshe rang tshugs bzung nas 'jug
pa las mi mang kha mang gi gros kha mi 'ding zhing rang dbang gzhan la mi bskur bas ri rab
bzhin du brling zhing brjid chags su bzhugs pa dang/ [T1:47b] ci gsung gi tshig btsun pas dus
min du gzhan dang zhal mi bsre zhing/

[C:72] zhu sa zer sa ci'ang med pa'i ngan dkyus can yang ma yin par skabs su babs pa na
gsung rnams gsal la tshang¹⁶¹ bar gnang bas kun gyis mig zur la lci zhing dmigs pa'i skabs
phyed pa dang/ deng sang¹⁶² gi mi phal cher grub gter gyi gsob gyon pa'i zol zog can rnams
la ha las te bkur zhing 'brel ba bzhag pa'i rjes su mi ring bar khas gtong pa'i¹⁶³ a gsar gyi lugs
de 'dra gtan nas gnang srol med pa de yang ngo mtshar che bar sems/ thugs gting nas ha cang
drang zhing gju bor gnas pas lugs gnyis kyi bya ba gang la'ang nye ring med par drang por

158 C is illegible

159 C has dra ma

160 T1 has 'drong pa

161 C is illegible, but appears to have yong

162 T1 has deng sangs

163 T1 has gtongs

gnang bas gya gyur spyod pa rnam bag tsha zhing dpyod ldan rnam gcig tu mgu ba'i gnas
 su gyur cing chen po la ngo bstod dang dman pa la brnyas bzhag rigs mi mdzad par gsung
 sgros tshun chad drang tha ler stsal ba zhig yin par snang/ [T1:48a] gangs can gyi chos lugs
 mtha' dag la dag snang sbyong ba ma gtogs phyogs zhen gyi zhur za mi gnang zhing/ rang
 lugs gtsang mar bzung ba las nya dang nyung ma bzhin phan tshun bsre ba'ang mi mdzad la/
 bstan pa thams cad la gcig tu phan pa'i thugs bskyed zla med du mnga' bar ma zad mkhas
 zhing grub pa'i rnam thar gtsang mar kun tu ngoms pas grub mtha' gzhan gyi che dgu rnam
 kyis kyang bstod bsngags kyis me tog char du bsnyil bas mtshon bstan pa thams cad kyis spyi
 dpal du bzhugs pa dang/

[C:73] rang 'dod kyis grong chog dang rnyed pas rnyed tshol sogs log 'tsho'i rigs nam yang
 mi gnang zhing/ mi shes kyang rdzun lung 'chad pa dang/ mi nyan kyang bslab ston byed pa
 dang/ mi 'ong yang mgo 'dren du rlom pa sogs mi byed dgu byed kyis zob sgros su song ba'i
 log 'dod rigs la thugs gtan nas mi dgyes/ gzhan gyi rjes su lad mo zlo ba tsam las 'jig rten gyi
 bya ba gang la'ang thugs mi gtad cing/ phyogs kyis che dgu thams cad kyis btud cing mchod
 pa'i gnas su byed kyang snyom chung kun spang gi brtul zhugs kho nas bya bral gyi ngang
 tshul gyis sku tshe 'da' par mdzad pas sgyu ma lta bu'i skyes bu nges shing bya btang thams
 cad kyis rgyal pro gyur pa dang/ bon dang bla ma snga ma snga ma dor nas phyi ma phyi ma
 tshol ba'i gsar ngas dang/ gzhan la tho 'tshams pa dang/ phrag dog gis smod pa sogs gtan nas
 mi mdzad cing/ mkhas pa'i khengs pa dang/ grub pa'i tho co'i rigs dri tsam yang mi bro bas
 kun dang mthun pa'i snyom chung gi rnam par bzhugs mod/ phugs su legs nyes bdo ba'i
 skabs su rang gshis tshul mthun gyi thugs stongs lhag par bdo bas kun las kyang lhun po ltar
 ngang tshul brling zhing/

[C:74; T1:49a] bon dang yang mi 'gal zhing thams cad kyang zil gyis gnon pa'i nus mthu mnga' bas gang la'ang mi 'jigs pa'i dpa' bo'i go 'phang la nye bar bzhugs pa ste de dag la bsam na rje bla ma'i rang gshis kyi yon tan yang gshan las ngo mtshar ba'i rnam thar du snang ngo/ gnyis pa ni/ rmi lam du yang nyes pa'i dri mas dben/ bstan pa'i sri zhu srog gi phyir yang bzod/ phyin las thams cad gzhan phan 'ba' zhig bsgrub/ 'phags chen rnam thar bskyangs la gsol ba 'debs/ zhes smos te/ sku che ba'i yon tan gzhan mnga' tshul yang/ rje nyid dus babs dang mthun par bstan pa'i gnyer dpon du byon pa yin pas bstan pa'i gzhung lam dang mthun pa'i rnam thar bskyangs pas/ deng sang kha gcig lta dgongs mtho yang sbas pa'i tshul kyis ci bder spyod pa dang/ phal mo ches ming gis rnal 'byor du rlom nas nag chang la ji mi snyom par spyod pa sogs kyis bstan pa'i che ba nyams smad pa'i tshul la dgongs nas/ nang du rtogs pa'i klong rdol yang phyi'i kun spyod mdo 'dul ba la gtso bor mdzad nas spyangs pa'i yon tan gyi brtul zhugs lhur len pas mthong na mi mthun pa med pa'i spyod lam spyi dang/ bslab pa'i gnas phra mo la'ang yul dus kyi rkyen dbang sogs kyi mig ltos su ma song bar tshul gos gyi dras drub dang/

[C:75] rung chu 'debs tshul tshun chad 'dul ba nas gsungs pa bzhin lag len du mdzad pa dang/ thugs gting nas bdag 'dzin rtsa ba chod cing dngos 'dzin gyi 'khrul ba zhig pas dgra bcom pa la nyes ltung gis gos mi srid pa bzhin du mdzad pa¹⁶⁴ phyi nang gang la'ang nongs pa'i dri mas gtan nas ma gos shing thugs rgyud gtsang ba'i stobs kyis mi dang mi ma yin pa thams cad dbang du 'dus nas gus 'dud lhur len byed pas thams cad kyi gtsug rgyan du mdzes pa dang/ [T1:50a] ltos bcas kun gyis mig zur la lci ba'i mthus bka' slob tu gtogs pa thams cad

164 T1 the m in mdzad pa is illegible

kyang bslab pa la gces spras kyi bdag rkyen du gyur pas bstan pa 'phel ba'i¹⁶⁵ rtsa lag tu gyur pa'o/ deng sang phal mo ches bstan pa'i bya bar rlom nas phan tshun nga che 'gran pa dang/ yo byad kyi gzi byin dang/ 'khos kha thabs bskyed pa tsam la bstan don chen por brtsi ba rnams kyi lugs ltar ma yin par/ rgyal ba'i bstan pa rnal ma zhang bod kyi mkhas grub rnams kyi bka' srol las byung ba bzhin mdo sngags snying po'i gnad rnams ji bzhin rang gi nges shing de la brten nas gzhan la 'dom pa gtso bor mdzad pas bstan pa'i rtsa lag tu gyur cing/ bstan pa 'ba' zhig sems pa'i khur lci bas cir yang non kyang de la khur du mi sems par ngal ba dang len gyi sgo nas/

[C:76] 'bri spel dang/ 'chad nyan sogs bon gyi sde bcu dang 'brel ba'i bon spyod gyi mgo lung gnang ba dang/ [T1:50b] dge 'dun gyi sde gtsor byas pa'i 'khor zung bzhi ya brgyad kyi grwa sde bsgrigs pa dang/ de'i mthun rkyen sbyor ba dang/ nyin mtshan du sbrel ba'i 'grel khrid bskyar mar spel ba sogs rang gi srog dang bsdos nas bstan pa'i sri zhu kho na snying la bcangs nas sku tshe ril po gces spras su mdzad pa ste/ dus¹⁶⁶ nam du'ang bstan pa'i khur chen khyer ba dang/ de ltar khyer ma nus kyang bstan don la sems khral tsam yang skyed mi nus na bstan 'dzin gyi ming 'dogs pa don med yin zhes gsung gin gda' bas de la legs par bsam na don che ba zhig yin 'dug go/ tshul de dag gi sgo nas 'gro don la gzigs tshul kyang/ 'gro don la snyad pa'i grong chog sogs kyis rang don sgrub pa'i kha bsag can gyi bsam tshul dang 'gal ba'i gzhan phan khur khyer gyi lhag bsam rnam par dag pas ris med kyi gdul bya rnams rjes su 'dzin pa dang/ [T1:51a] dgon sde rnams la bslab bya dang 'brel ba'i dran bskul gnang ba dang blang dor gyi bca' yig spel nas legs lam gyi khrigs su 'dzud pa dang/ spyod yul gyi

165 T1 has 'phel pa'i

166 C has dum

grong rnams su dge sdig rgyu 'bras kyi bslab ston gnang pa dang/ gson gshin so so'i dge
rdzong gi yul srol btsugs nas thar lam la sbyor ba dang/

[C:77] gzhan yang spyod lam rnam bzhi'i bya ba tshun chad la ma brtag pa'i dran pa
nyams pa mi mnga' zhing spyod yul yongs su dag pa'i smon lam gyis rgyas 'debs gnang bas
mtshon 'brel tshad don ldan gyi sems dpa' chen por bzhugs pas ji ltar mdzad pa thams cad
gzhan phan gyi bya ba kho na las nam yang mi 'da' bas tshur mthong rang rgyud pa'i gang
zag gzhan dang dbyibs mtshungs su blta ba'i gnas med pas 'phags chen dam pa'i rnam par
thar ba mchog la mnga' brnyes pa ste de dag ni 'phros don du cung zad smos pa'o/

[T1:51b] gang la nongs pa'i dri ma gtan med cing// bsngags 'os yon tan dpal byis legs
'khyud pa'i// gsang gsum mdzad pa'i ngang tshul gang yin pa// ri bo'i khongs su dpyod ldan
gleng gzhir snyan// gzung 'dzin rtogs pa'i yul las ring song zhing// lhag bsam rnam dag sems
la dbang 'byor bas// so so skye bo'i blo yis mi chun pa'i// dam pa'i ngang tshul 'phags pa'i che
ba yin//

[C:78] zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

gnyis pa don bsdu ba ni/

rang don thos bsam sgom pa'i mthar son cing// gzhan don bshad sgrub las kyi phrin las
spel// gnyis don mkhas btsun bzang po'i dpal mnga' ba// mtshungs med bla ma'i zhabs la gsol
ba 'debs// zhes smos te/ [T1:52a] skyes bu chen po 'di'i rnam par thar pa'i mdo ni/ rang don
du mdo sngags bla med dang bcas pa'i smin grol rgyab rten gyi rim pa mtha' dag brgyud pa
bar ma chad pa las mang du thos shing gsan pa rgya mtsho'i mthar son pa dang/ theg pa
thams cad kyi lta sgom spyod gsum dam tshig 'bras bu¹⁶⁷ dang bcas pa la lung dang rigs pa

167 T1 has 'brus bu

dang man ngag gi sgo nas bsam byung gi blos dpyod ba'i mthu thob pas grub mtha'i de nyid
 kyi gting phyin pa¹⁶⁸ dang/ byang chub kyi sems dang/ rim pa gnyis kyi ting 'dzin dang/ bla
 med theg pa'i lta sgom gyi nyams len gyi gter la mnga' brnyes pas sa lam gyi yon tan thams
 cad yongs su rdzogs pa'o/ gzhan don du phyi rgyud dang/ nang rgyud dang/ gsang rgyud theg
 pa'i gzhung lugs mtha' dag la bshad rgyud kyi ka chen btsugs pa dang/

[C:79] ma ki 'dul ba mdor btus nas ya ki bla med theg pa'i bar nyams len sgrub brgyud
 kyi shing rta'i lam srol phyes pa dang/ [T1:52b] de dag gi¹⁶⁹ gzhi rten du rten gsum dang/
 bshad sgrub kyi 'dus sde'i tshogs bskrun te bya ba las kyi 'khor lo'i phrin las spel bas 'gro don
 rlabs chen mdzad pa'o/ gnyis don du sde snod mtha' dag skyes thob dang sgom byung gi blos
 tshul bzhin du gsal bar byed nus pa'i smra ba'i dbang phyug chen por gyur bas mkhas pa
 rnams kyi gtsug rgyan du gyur pa dang/ sdom pa gsum gyi nyes ltung phra ba tsam la'ang
 nyams pa med cing ngo lkog gi rnam thar byi la'i ngang tshul can ma yin par rnam pa kun tu
 rgyal ba dgyes pa'i tshul khrims la gnas pas btsun pa'i mchog tu gyur pa dang/ dbra pa grub
 chen gyis lung gis bsngags pa bzhin bstan pa la phan pa'i 'chad nyan mtha' yas shing phyogs
 med kyi bstan pa'i bdag po rnams la smin grol gyi rgyun spel bas bstan pa 'phel zhing yun
 ring du gnas pa'i btsas su gyur pa ni ngo mtshar gyi mdzad bzang thams cad kyi gtso bor yin
 la/ [T1:53a] tshul de dag gi sgo nas rang gzhan gyi don gnyis mthar phyin cing bstan 'gro
 yongs kyi spyi dpal du bzhugs pa ste/ rje bla ma'i rnam thar gyi spyi sdom du¹⁷⁰ smos pa'o/

[C:80] thos bsam sgom pa'i rtsa ba rab brling zhing// mkhas btsun bzang po'i kho lag
 rgyas pa'i khyon// bshad sgrub las kyi 'bras bu g.yur za ba'i// dpag bsam gnyis pa mdo khams

168 T1 has pyin pa

169 C omits gi

170 T1 has sngom du

ljongs su byon// gang zhig dam par mtshon pa'i tshul dgu zhes// ri bo'i khongs su mkhas pas
bsgrags pa'i dbyangs// deng sangs skyob pa khyod gcig kho na yis// bdag gir bzhes pa min
nam bla ma rje//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

gnyis pa thun mong ma yin pa nang gi rnam thar cung zad smos pa ni/ [T1:53b] rje btsun
dam pa 'di nyid kyi yang dag pa'i lam la legs par zhugs nas nyams su blangs pas so so'i
mngon rtogs dang rjes su 'brel ba'i grub gnyis kyi dge mtshan mtha' yas pa mnga' pa yin
kyang thugs sgam zhing gsang ba bsrung ba la mkhas pas mthong thos su cher ma byung
yang zhal byung 'phros don du byung ba rnams la bstan nas cung zad spel na gnyis/ grub pa'i
yon tan mnga' tshul dang/ zab mo'i bon la dbang tshul lo/ dang po ni/

rtsa gsum lhag pa'i lha yi zhal gzigs shing//

[C:81] las bzhi lhun grub srung ma bran du 'khol// rtsa rlung dbang thob snang bzhi tshad
du skyel// grub pa'i rtags mtshan rdzogs la gsol ba 'debs// zhes smos te/ grub pa'i ngo mtshar
gyi rtag mtshan mtha' yas par snang yang re zhig mtshon tsam smos na/ snga gong yul dbus
su theg skabs gshen bstan rin po che'i 'byung gnas gtsang sman ri'i dgon du byon pa'i
tshe/[T1:54a] bstan pa'i bdag po rje mnyam med chen po nyid zhi dul tshangs par spyod pa'i
chas can 'od kyi skur bzhugs pa zhig mjal/ byin rlabs zhus pas sku'i gnas gsum nas 'od zer
dkar dmar mthing gsum rim dang cig char byung nas dbang bzhi thob pa'i nges shes
'khrungs/ zhal 'dzum bzhin mdo sngags yongs su rdzogs pa'i bstan pa'i bdag po gyis shig pa'i
dbugs 'byin gnang bas don gyi rgyal tshabs su dbang bskur brnyes/ khrid gzhung 'ga' zhig tu
rje sman ri ba'i bstan pa'i mdzes rgyan tu gyur cig ces gnang ba'ang de'i don yin par snang/
phyis su rang la bla ma'i byin rlabs kyi dbang dang dgongs gtad thun min gnang bas rang nas
kyang rje rin po che'i bla ma'i rnal 'byor dang khid yig sogs kyi zhabs 'debs kyang zhus pa

yin no/ [T1:54b] rkong bon rir byon skabs gyer ri'i dbu rtser 'od gur du kun tu bzang po rgyan med gcer bu zhig dngos su mjal bas de phyin rig pa rang so zin cing rtogs pa'i rtsal rgyas pa byung gsungs/

[C:82] rang dgon du dran pa tshe sgrub gnang skabs lha dang gzhal yas khang mngon rtogs dang mthun par zhal gzigs shing/ tshe bum las bum chu khol ba dang/ tshe ril sgrub khang phyi nang du 'phel ba dang/ tshe 'brang las myu gu sngon po skyes pa byung/ mgon khang du bzhugs pa'i skabs shig na/ 'chi med yab sras rnam pa gsum zhal dngos su gzigs nas byin rlabs¹⁷¹ gnang/ ye shes dbal mo bran du 'khol te dngos nyams rmi lam du zhal mthong zhing sdong grogs byed pa'i rtags mang bar byung gsungs/ dus phyis su dgung lo drug cu re lnga'i dus su bon zab na bdud zab pa'i dpes rje bla mas nges don gyi bstan pa ches cher spel ba la log par blta ba'i dam sri'i rigs kyis bar du gcod pa'i phyir lha 'bre mtha' yas pas cho 'phrul sna tshogs bstan nas dngos su mthong ba'i lam du rgol du byung ba'i tshe nyin mtshan drug tu ting nge 'dzin thun gcig la bzhugs/ [T1:55a] yi dam dbal phur nag po'i bskyed rim la brten nas bsnyen bsgrub las sbyor 'dal ka¹⁷² zhib rgyas su gnang bas dam sri rjes 'brang dang bcas pa tshar thag bcad/ rgyal gdon gdug pa can zhig bka' 'og tu bcug pas dam tshig can la gnod pa mi byed pa'i khas blangs byed pa byung gsungs/

[C:83] de phyin nas rje'i ring lugs 'dzin pa nams la rgab 'dre med cing bkra shis la byin chags pa zhig byung bar snang ste kho bos bstan 'gro'i ched du drag las kyis sgo tsam bstan pa yin zhes gsung gnang yang mdzad/ [T1:55b] gzhan yang yi dam mchog lnga sogs la bsnyen sgrub mdzad pa'i tshe kun gyis mthong snang du bag dro zhing byin ngad ldan pa dang/ sgrub khang la me stag 'phro ba dang/ gta' chen khol ba sogs kyis ngag rgyun mang du snang

171 T1 has pyin rlabs

172 Both texts give 'del kha, which appears to be a misspelling.

yang gtan khel gyi thor 'khod pa mi snang zhing/ slob ma blun dad can gyis bla ma zog por
 gtong ba'i dpe bzhin rje bla ma nyid nang gi mngon par rtogs pa'i yon dan mdo sngags kyi
 lam rim dpang por rung ba'i gzi byin gyis mtho ba la zhal gzigs lung bstan rigs dad pa skye
 ba'i sgo tsam las 'bri ba'i ngal ba ma byas shing de tsam la 'thus pa'ang yin no/ gnyis pa ni/ 'og
 min zhing du rgyal 'phags tshogs rnam kyis/ zab rgyas bon sde yongs kyi bka' gtang cing/
 mdo sngags bon gyi mdzod la mnga' brnyes pa'i/ [T1:56a] bka' babs dag snang thob la gsol
 ba 'debs/ zhes smos te/ gangs can gyi ljongs su bru zhu spa rme'u sogs kyi bstan 'dzin phal
 mo che rnam rang rang gi bka' babs kyi bon sde rnam kyi smin grol dang 'chad nyan la gtso
 bo ltar **mdzad pa**¹⁷³ de dag so sor nas che ba dang ldan pa yin mod kyi/

[C:84] mdo sngags bla med dang bcas pa phyogs thams cad nas gsan cing thugs nyams su
 bzhes te gzhan la spel nas gdul bya skyong ba ni rje 'di nyid kyi khyad par gyi bon du grub pa
 ste/ de dag so so'i ring lugs kyi rgyun btsal nas spel tshul mdo tsam gong du song ba las shes
 shing/ de'ang ring brgyud bar ma chad par yod pa bzhugs so cog gsan pa gzhir bzhag nas '**dir**
na¹⁷⁴ nye brgyud bka' babs kyi gtad rgya thob tshul ni/ dag pa'i snang bar 'og min rang snang
 gi zhing kham rnam par dag par/ dus gsum sangs rgyas la bskal bzang gi sang rgyas stong
 dang rgya chen bka'i brgyud pa rnam kyis bskor ba/ [T1:56b] 'chi med yum sras gshen gsum
 la bla ma rig 'dzin mkha' 'gro dang zab lam gsang sems kyi brgyud pa rnam kyis bskor ba/
 kun bzang rigs lnga¹⁷⁵ la ye gshen¹⁷⁶ sems dpa'i tshogs dang nges don bla med kyi brgyud pa
 rnam kyis bskor ba dngos su zhal gzigs nas/ dgongs pas byin gyis brlabs shing brda'i dbang
 bskur ba dang/ thugs yid dbyer med dud 'dres pa'i nyams shar te/ rtse gcig tu gsol pa btab pa'i

173 T1 has **mdzad pas**

174 C has '**di na**

175 T1 has rigs lda

176 C has yi gshen

rkyen las mdo sngags bla med bcas pa'i bka' gter yongs rdzogs kyi smin grol rgyab brten dang bcas pa bod gangs can du bzhugs so 'tshal¹⁷⁷ gsan grub pa'i thugs nyams khyad par can 'khrungs/

[C:85] de phyin nas **dpe rgyun**¹⁷⁸ dkon pa'i rigs mang po'ang¹⁷⁹ phyag tu 'byor nas rang nyid kyis nyams bzhes su mdzad cing de dag spyi '**bre**¹⁸⁰ ltar bka' gtad¹⁸¹ gnang/ [T1:57a] nye brgyud kyi lugs su byas nas lung rgyun spel bar gnang na byin rlabs kyi tshan kha dang ldan cing dgos pa che bar sems mod kyi/ dam pa nyid ni de 'dra'i rigs gzhan gyi blur shong dka' ba dang/ zog po'i rigs kyis bstan pa la dbang za ba 'ong rigs la dgongs nas snyan 'bul zhu skabs mi phyed cing dngos su phag len du 'debs par ma gnang yang/ slob dpon 'od zer dpag med kyi po ti'i lung dbang gi phyag bzhes bzhin bka' gtad kun la gnang bas byin rlabs kyi rgyun la de gas chog par dga' bas rjes 'jug rnams skal bas ma phong tsam du mchis so/ rgyud dang sgrub sde sogs so so dang 'brel ba'i nye brgud rigs yod tshul gsung zur re yod mod kyi rgyas par gsung pa ni ma thos shing/ nye brgyud skor 'di rigs rang nyid la ji ltar gsungs pa rnams mgnon sum tshang mar byas nas bris shing/ [T1:57b] rtogs brjod rgyas pa zhal gsung ma las kyang dngos su mi gsal yang rags pa tsam thugs sras dam pa rnga ljongs bkra shis 'khyil gyi mchog sprul tshul khrims bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan la gsungs phebs yod pa'ang mngon te/

[C:86] khong nyid kyis mdzad pa'i rnam thar gsol 'debs las/ ngo mtshar dag pa'i zhing khams 'byams klas par/ rdul rnyed rnam 'dren bye ba'i zhal blta zhing/ zab rgyas gdams pa'i

177 C has 'tshol

178 T1 has **dpe rgyud**

179 T1 has mang po bang

180 C has '**bres**

181 C has bka' gtang

bdud rtsi ngoms med du/ gsol ba'i dag snang thob la gsol ba 'debs/ zhes gsung pa las rjes su rtogs so/ khyad par du rje bla ma nyid bon gyi mdzod la mnga' brnyes pas nyin mtshan du bon sgo rab 'byams la spyod pas bka' bab thob tshul gong smos dang/ dag snang dang de mthun snyan brgyud du byung ba'i rigs mtha' yas pa las/ re zhig gter chen gsang sngags gling pa'i dran pa'i bka'i thang yig las/ [T1:58a] de rjes shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan zhes% dgongs gter¹⁸² nam mkha'i mdzod kyis thugs thig rtsal% mdzod chen lnga dang rdzogs chen zab don skor% dmar la zab pa rgya cher spel ba 'ong% zhes pa'i lung gis bstan pa ltar je nyid ring mo'i dus nas 'chi med rgyal ba yab sras kyis thug rjes su bzung nas dkyil 'khor chen por dbang gis smin par byas shing gdams par legs par phog pa'i thugs bskyed **kyi**¹⁸³ sa bon dus su sad pas sku tshe 'dir gter ston gyi go 'phang la bzhugs pa zhig yin par snang la/

[C:87] gter ston gyi mtshan 'dogs dang thugs stsol bzhes na zab gter du ma la dbang ba zhig yin par mngon mod/ bstan pa spyi'i bshad sgrub kyis khur bzhes par dgongs nas gter rnying skor kyis smin grol 'chad spel gyis bstan pa'i srog mthud pa 'di ka gtso bor mdzad pas gter bon gsar pa la thugs gtsigs ye mi gnang ba'i rnam par mchis/ deng sang gter min gter 'dras sa steng gang ba'i tshe rgyal ba'i bstan pa la rma mi 'byin pa zhig gal che zhes dang/ gter rnyin rigs kyis gzhi legs par ma tshugs na bon gsar pa re zung gis sa zin po mi 'ong ba yin zhes gsung gin gda' sde dgag dgos kyis don la dgongs par mngon no/ sku chung ngu'i dus nas snon gnas rjes dran dang tshig bcad sgrubs thabs mang po thol thol rdol ba zhig 'ong 'dug kyang nyams kyis gzugs brnyan du snang bas btang snyoms su bzhag pa yin zhes gsung/ de'ang rdzogs chen sku gsum rang shar kun tu bzang po'i thugs tig/ rtsa gsum yongs 'dus rnams kyis bka' babs tshul mdo tsam ni/ thog mar rdzogs chen sku gsum rang shar gyi bon sde

182 C has dgongs gtor

183 C has thugs bskyed kyis

ni/ [T1:59a] gter chen gsang sngags gling pas lhang brag nor bu'i yang rtse nas shog ser spyen drangs nas rtsa ba'i gter bdag rje nyid la bka' babs pa bzhin grub dbang yab sras lhan rgyas nas rtsa gsum gyi las byang dang dbang chog nams gtan la phabs/

[C:88] phyis su gter gzhung gi dbang chog bsdu pa dang khrid yig rtsa tshig gis bstan don nams rtsa bar bzung nas sems phyogs bskor spyi dang snyan brgyud rdzogs chen dang bcas pa'i ring brgyud las byung ba'i dgongs pa nams bcud du dril nas dbang bzhi'i cho ga dang phag rdzogs zung 'jug gi khrid yig rgyas par spel nas gnang ba ste/ gter chen rin po che'i sa gter las byung ba rje nyid la bka' babs pa rtsa ba dang/ sems phyogs bskor gyi ring brgyud dang/ rje nyid la bon sde mtha' dag gi bka' babs kyi nye brgyud byung ba nams gung sbrel nas spel pas bka' gter chu bo gcig 'dres su¹⁸⁴ song bas ring brgyud dang nye brgyud gang du 'dren kyang chog pa'i rgyu mtshan ni de yin no/

[T1:59b] yang zab nam mkha'i mdzod la nang gses su bka' brgyud kyi bka' babs dang/ dgongs gter gyi bka' babs gnyis las/ dang po bka' brgyud kyi bka' babs ni bde gshegs 'dus pa kun bzang thugs tig gi skor nams yin te/ de'ang nyag shod brag yer gnas phug mtshal kha ru bzhugs pa'i tshe snan brgyud kyi skor sogs la lta rtog¹⁸⁵ gnang bas dad pa **lhang**¹⁸⁶ gis byung ba'i rkyen gyis brgyud pa'i bla ma nams la gsol ba rtse gcig tu btab pas nyin gcig tho rangs su kun bzang rigs lnga'i zhal dngos su gzigs dgongs pa'i klong nas rgyal thabs spyi¹⁸⁷ blugs kyi dbang bskur mdzad nas byin gyis brlabs bla med rdzogs pa chen po'i lha dgongs mngon du gyur te/

184 T1 has 'des su

185 T1 has blta rtog

186 T1 has **lhangs**

187 T1 has sbyi

[C:89; T1:60a] rdzogs chen sde gsum gyi don thams cad thugs la gsal bar byung/ de
 phyin chad rig pa la rang bzhin gyis brtan pa thob pa byung gsungs/ de la brten nas phyis
 shar rdza g.yung drung lhun por bla med theg pa'i rgyud sde mtha' dag gi don 'grel dbyings
 rig rin po che'i mdzod dgongs pa'i rtsal gyis gtan la phab/ de las khyad par man ngag rdzogs
 pa chen po'i lam thams cad las kyang ches thun min du gyur pa/ 'od gsal thod rgal gyi gnad
 zab mo ye nyid ston pa mchog gis dgongs pas brgyud pa rnams/ zab don tsitta'i dwangs ma
 khyab gdal du spel bar phongs nas/ ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma rnams kyis g.yung drung gi
 brdas bcings pa snga rabs kyi mkhas grub du mar byon pa **ngag gis**¹⁸⁸ kyang dgrol du ma
 bzod pa nyid/ slar yang bka'i bdag mo mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i lung gis bskul ba dang/
 [T1:60b] khad par dbu ma'i rtsa mdud grol zhing/ sngon gnas rjes su dran pa'i stabs kyis/ sbas
 don mngon du¹⁸⁹ phyees te snyigs dus skal ldan rnams kyi spyod yul du rjen par ston pa 'di
 yang rje bla ma 'di'i thun min khyad bon gyi cha shas gcig nges par yin no/

[C:90] rdzogs chen sde gsum gyi smin grol thams cad kyi snying po'i yang bcud rigs lnga
 bde gshegs 'dus pa kun tu bzang po'i thugs tig gi skor phrin las/ dbang chog/ khrid yig bcas
 dgongs pa klong rdol gyi rtogs pa la brten nas spel ba ste/ 'di rnams bka' nas bka' brgyud pa'i
 ring brgyud dang mthun zhing/ dgongs nyams byin rlabs kyi nye brgyud kyang yod pas gnyis
 ka ltar yang mi 'gal zhes zhal nas gsungs mod/ rnam pa ring brgyud kyi zhabs 'deggs su spel
 bar ltar gzhung tshig gis bstan pas bka' brgyud kyi bka' babs su 'dren pa'o/ [T1:61a] gnyis pa
 dgongs gter gyi bka' babs ni rtsa gsum kun 'dus kyi skor rnams te/ dben gnas g.yung drung
 lhun por bzhugs skabs/ nam zhig 'od gsal gyi snang char 'ja' tshon 'od lnga'i klong du rje 'gro
 mgon tshe dbang rig 'dzin gyi zhal gzigs shing brda'i byin rlabs gnang nas nyid la thim pas

188 C has **dag gis**

189 T1 has mdon du

thugs yid dbyer med du 'dres pa'i nyams rtogs shar/ tshe rabs thams cad gyi rigs kyi bdag por
byur pa'i gsal snang skyes gsungs/ de'i ngang la yun ring du mnyam par bzhag pas rig rtsal
ma 'gags pa'i 'char sgor rtsa gsum yongs 'dus kyi skor rnams thugs la lam lam gsal ba¹⁹⁰ ltar
gtan la phab par mdzad/

[C:91] phyis su rang la'ang cho ga 'di rnams ma bcos par bkod pa yin bas dgongs gter du
btags kyang rung bar yod ces dngos su gsungs/ 'di dag gi gter 'byung sogs kha gsal rgyas pa
ma byung yang dgongs gter nyid du nges par grub pas yid ches skyed par rigs so/ [T1:61b] de
dang 'brel bar mdzod gzhan rnams kyang gter ma'i phyogs su gtogs dgos te/ dran pa'i bka'
thang gis lung gis bstan pa dang/ rje rang gi gsungs nas kyang kho bo'i mdzod chen 'di rnams
rtsom pa¹⁹¹ **ni**¹⁹² gsung rtsom gzhan dang mi 'dra ba'i khyad par yod de/ tshig rnams rang blos
ci babs su bris kyang don rnams sems la thol byung du rdol pa rnams bkod pa shas che/ skabs
'ga' zhig mi gsal bar byung rigs la lhag pa'i lha la gsol ba btab pas phyi nyin nas dpe la mi ltos
par yid ngos nas khrol nus pa zhig 'ong **bar** 'dug/¹⁹³ skabs 'ga' zhig nyams dang rmi lam du
gzhan gyis bshad pa byung ba la brten nas bris pa yin/ ye shes kyi .dakkii mas zhu ba'i glus
bskul ba dang/ legs so'i gsung gis dbugs dbyung gnang ba'i mtshan ma bzang po ni mang du
byung zhes rang la dngos su gsungs phebs/ [T1:62a] des na dgongs gter dang/ dag snang
dang/ snyan brgyud ltar gang du bzhag kyang gter ma'i phyogs su gtogs par mngon pas gang
zag phal pa'i bka' rten dang mtshungs pa'i gnas med pas rjes 'jug rnams kyis shes pa gal
che'o/

190 C has lam gsal ba, omitting one lam

191 T1 has rtsom ba

192 T1 has **na**

193 C has 'ong 'dug

[C:92] skabs 'di'i tshig sgros rnams rang la mthong thos su byung ba rnams gtsor byas nas
smras pa ste rje bla ma nyid dpang por **bzhugs**¹⁹⁴ chog par yod do/

rdzas sngags 'byung po'i cho 'phrul lam rtogs su// rlom pa'i ra gan gser du brdzu min par//
zhi lhag rlung sems mthu yis grub pa'i 'phrul// sa 'og gser gyi 'od bzhin sbas kyang gsal//
zhang bod mkhas pa'i tshogs kun skyengs byed pa'i// lung dang rigs pa smra la mtshar du ci//
thun mongs ma yin nges gsang bon gyi mdzod// [T1:62b] rgyal rnams 'gros te khyod la byin
min nam//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

gsum pa ches thun mong ma yin pa gsang ba'i rnam par thar pa ni/ rje bla ma nyid thugs
rje las sprul gyi ston pa mi gzugs su byon pa yin cing/ rgyal 'phags tshogs dang dbyer med
pa'i yon tan gyi gter la longs spyod pas gang zag mchog dman gang dang yang thun mong ma
yin pa'i zab cing rgya che ba'i rnam thar mnga' tshul zur tsam smos na gnyis/

[C:93] rigs kyi bdag po g.yung drung 'chang dang dbyer med pa'i tshul dang/ gsang ba
gsum gyi rnam thar mtha' yas ba'i thsul lo/ dang po ni/

rigs dang dkyil 'khor kun gyi khyab bdag che// mchog thun dngos grub ma lus 'byung ba'i
gnas// sgrub brgyud nges pa'i gsang mdzod kun gyi bdag/ g.yung drung 'chang dbang khyed
la gsol ba 'debs//

[T1:63a] zhes smos te/ dam pa 'di nyid nges pa'i don du rgyal ba rnams dang dbyer med
pa'i bdag nyid du bzhugs shing/ drang ba'i don du mkhas dang grub pa'i skyes rabs kyi
phreng ba sna tshogs su bzung nas gdul bya'i don rgya cher mdzad pa'i tshul gong du mtshon
tsam smos pas don gyi rtogs brjod rgyas pa so so'i rnam par thar pa las shes par bya la/ des na

194 C has **bzhogs**

rgyal 'phags dam pa'i tshogs dang thugs kyi dgongs pa dang mdzad pa'i phrin las mtha' dag
 dbyer ma¹⁹⁵ mchis pa'i go 'phang¹⁹⁶ la gnas pas na/ sku gsum sangs rgyas thams cad kyi spyi
 gzugs/ rtsa gsum dkyil 'khor thams cad kyi mnga' bdag g.yung drung 'chang chen po dang
 gnyis su med pa'i bdag nyid du gyur pa ste/

[C:94] de'ang dbang dang byin rlabs kyi rtsa ba bla ma dang/ mchog dang thun mong gi
 dngos grub thams cad kyi rtsa ba yi dam dang/ [T1:63b] las kyi gnyer 'dzin phrin las thams
 cad kyi rtsa ba dpa' bo mkha' 'gro ste/ rtsa ba gsum du ma 'dus pa'i skyabs gnas gzhan gang
 yang med la/ de dag thams cad kyang rigs dang dkyil 'khor thams cad kyi 'byung gnas g.yung
 drung 'chang chen gyi ye shes kyi rol pa gcig tu nges pas/ de'i dgongs pa dang dbyer med pa'i
 bdag nyid du byang chub pas lha dang bla ma dang mkha' 'gro sogs gang du bzhag kyang mi
 'gal zhin de dag thams cad kyi phrin las ji snyed pa¹⁹⁷ rje btsun chen po gcig kho nas kyang
 mdzad pa'i bdag nyid can du byur pa'o/ gnyis pa ni/ ye shes sku mchog nam mkha' mtha'
 dang mnyam/ gzhom med gsungs dbyangs so so'i skad du ston/ zab gsang dgongs pas shes
 bya kun la khyab/ gsang ba bsam mi khyab la gsol ba 'debs/ zhes smos te/ rje bla ma nyid
 rgyal ba thams cad dang dgongs pa ro gcig pas de dag gi yon tan gyi che ba ji snyed pa thams
 cad kyang thun mong du gyur pa yin la/ [T1:64a] yon tan gyi che ba de dag kyang bsdu na
 sku gsung thugs kyi gsang ba gsum du 'du zhing/

[C:95] de'i tshul yang rnam pa'i ngos nas mtha' yas kyang ngo bo'i dbang du byas na ye
 shes kyi rang bzhin gyi sku ni bem po'i yul las 'das pas dngos po dang mtshan ma'i rdzas su
 ma grub kyang gzhan ngor rnam par rol pas nam mkha'i khams kyi mtha' dang mnyam par

195 C has dbyir ma

196 T1 has gong 'phang

197 C has ji snyeng pa

rjes su 'gro ba dang/ gzhom du med pa'i gsungs ni byed rtsol gyi yul las 'das pas sgra tshig rang mtshan par ma grub kyang 'gro ba rigs drug so so'i skad du cir yang bsgyur ba dang/ zab cing gsang ba'i thugs ni gnas lugs ji lta ba'i dbyings su mnyam pas smra bas ma brjod pa'i yul las 'das kyang shes bya ji snyed pa'i 'char tshul kun la yongs su khyab pa'i bdag nyid chen po ste/ [T1:64b] de ltar na ngo bo'i cha nas don dam ji lta ba rtogs pa'i sgo nas ye shes mngon du byas pas gnas lugs don gyi che ba dang/ de'i stobs kyis zhi ba'i phyogs kyi legs pa'i yon tan mtha' dag dang ngam shugs kyis rdzogs pa dang/ rnam pa'i cha nas shes bya ji snyed pa'i 'char tshul gyi sgo nas gdul bya mtha' yas pa'i don mdzad pas snang tshul rtags kyi che ba dang/ de'i stobs kyis srid pa'i phyogs kyi legs pa'i yon tan mtha' dag la mnga' dbang 'byor ba'i bdag nyid du bzhugs pa ste/ mdor na rgyal ba thams cad kyi bdag nyid srid zhi¹⁹⁸ thams cad kyi spyi dpal chen por grub pas yon tan gyi cha shas 'di tsam mo zhes so skyes kyi blo yi ra ba las ring du brgal ba'i ngang tshul can du shes nas dad pa rtse gcig tu bsgom par bya ste/

[C:96] 'di'i tshul rnam pa'i sgo nas spros na mang yang don gyi cha nas zab mo'i rtogs pa la '**jug pa'i**'¹⁹⁹ sgo tsam bstan pa'o//

[T1:65a] spang²⁰⁰ rtogs mthar phying sangs rgyas kun gyi dngos// sde gsum bon sgo ji snyed 'byung ba'i gnas// rab 'byams dkyil 'khor khyab bdag he ru ka// rje btsun bla ma'i sku gsung thugs su rdzogs// gang gi gsang gsum yon tan phrin las dpal// phyi nang gzhan gsum bsam mi khyab pa'i tshul// ye shes rnam par yangs pa'i gar mdzad na// nam mkha'i ra ba las kyang ring du brgal//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

198 T1 has sri zhi, or possible srid zhi with an illegible d

199 C has 'dug pa'i

200 T1 has sbang

gsum pa gshegs rjes kyi byung ba brjod pas mjug bsdu ba ni/ mdo²⁰¹ las/ rtag tu re rnams
 sum phyung phyir/ lan gcig mya ngan 'da' tshul bstan/ zhes gsung pa dang tshul mthun par
 zhing khams 'dir tha ma'i mdzad pa la brten nas mya ngan las 'das pa'i tshul gyis 'gro ba'i don
 gzhan mdzad pa'i tshul cung zad smos pa la gnyis/

[C:97] gshegs rjes kyi bya ba sgrub pa'i tshul/ slar yang 'gro ba'i don la dgongs pa'i tshul
 lo//

dang po ni/ gdul dka'i zhing 'dir sngon smon ji bzhin du// bdun cu'i snyed du bstan 'gro'i
 don spel nas// myang 'das tshul gyis 'gro mang 'dul ba'i phyir// tha ma'i mdzad pa bstan la
 gsol ba 'debs//

zhes smos te/ bdag cag gi 'dren mchog dam pa 'di nyid deng sang snyigs ma'i dus na bstan
 'dzin gyi skyes bu sus kyang 'gran zla dang bral ba'i phrin las kyi sgo nas zhing 'di'i gdul bya
 rnams kyi don mdzad nas sku dngos kyi gdul bya'i don re zhig mthar phyin pa'i tshe/ zhing
 khams gzhan du phrin las 'jug pa la don che bar gzigs nas gzugs sku dbyings su bsdu ba'i
 tshul bstan pa ste/ de'ang dgung lo don lnga pa chu mo bya lo'i dus nas snga mus gyi bon
 khrid gnang skabs rnams su khrid dang gnas skabs kyi lab gleng sna tshogs pa mdzad pa zhig
 byung song/ [T1:66a] de nas rim par gsol chas 'dren mi 'dren med pa gang byung du gnang
 ba dang/ byis pa rnams dang rtsed mo la dgyes pa sogs 'jig rten tshe 'di'i snang zhen thams
 cad rang sar zhig nas snang ba gtad med rgya yan gyi zlos gar cir yang ngoms/

[C:98] de skabs su slob ma kha cig gis bla ma'i sku la lha sku mang po bkra ba mjal/ nye
 gnas pas zhabs sa la mi reg par gshegs pa dang/ gsol zhal bar snang la 'jog pa dang/ mar me
 la sku grib med pa dngos su mthong 'dug/ de rjes nas nged shar rdza pa mi rgal po lags pas

201 T1 has ngo

nam 'chi mi shes zhes gsungs nas slob ma rnams la ngas lo brgyad la nye bar bon khrid kyis
 slob ma bskyangs pa yin/ bon rnams chud ma zos par gyis/ bshad pas gzhung srong/ sgrub
 pas nyams su longs/ nyams rtogs kyis btsan sa zin par mdzod/ [T1:66b] nges don sgrub
 brgyud kyis bstan pa dang mjal ba 'di skal ba bzang por gda' ye am/ go'am zhes pa'i zhal ta
 phebs/ dgung lo don drug pa shing khyi lor rje'i slob ma skal bzang g.yung drung nas sman
 sgrub cig mdzad bzhed yod pa la/ khyed kyis zla ba bzhi pa'i nang tshun chad ma grub na
 rang re rnams mi 'dzom gsungs/ sman sgrub zin nas zla ba bzhi pa'i tshes gnyis nyin da sa
 stong zhig tu 'gro gsungs nas ri ngogs²⁰² rab zhi steng zer bar phebs nas bzhugs/ slob ma
 rnams la yon tan thams chad kyis gzhi rten sdom pa dang dam tshig yin pas rang yid ches par
 gyis zhes pa'i zhal ta nan tan gnang nas rgyun du lta stangs kyis ngang du bzhugs so/

[C:99] tshes bcu gsum nyin tshe dbang pod yul ma'i tshogs mchod rgyas pa zhig gnang
 nas/ g.yung drung gi mgur mang du blangs/ [T1:67a] cog gur gyi sgo btsam nas sgo ma phye
 zhig gsungs nas/ mu tshug smar ro/ zhes pa sogs bkra shis pa'i bden tshig mang du brjod de
 cha lugs lnga ldan gyi ngang du bzhugs so/ phyi nyin nas cog gur gyi²⁰³ steng du 'ja' gur zlum
 'phrig che chung du ma dang/ gyen 'greng rtsib shar gyi rnam par mang du shar/ 'ja' 'od rnams
 mtshan mor 'od dkar snam shar rkyang ba lta bu lhag par gsal ba zhig byung 'dug/ zhag gsum
 pa nas sa g.yo ba dang/ sgra grags pa dang/ me tog gi char sil ma babs pa byung/ zhag bzhi
 pa nas cog gur gyi srubs nas 'od sna tshogs 'phro zhing 'ja' tshon sna lnga pa lam lam 'khyug
 cing smug rlangs khol ba ltar byung bas/ de nas dngos slob dam pa rnal 'byor yongs²⁰⁴ kyis
 khyu mchog tshul khriims dbang phyug nyid nas/ da gdungs nyid bzhag yun ring na ma 'ong

202 T1 has ri ngog

203 C omits gyi

204 T1 has yong

pa na dad pa dang smon lam gyi rten ye mi lhag pa'i nyen yod par 'dug gsungs nas sku gdung
mjal ba la ring ste cog gur gyi sgo phyas nas phyag 'tshal bas/ [T1:67b] sku gdung 'od gyis
btum nas bar snang la khru gang tsam 'phags nas 'dug pa mjal/

[C:100] mdun du bcar pas phyag zhabs kyi sen mo phal cher gdan thog tu 'thor nas sku
gdung **byis pa**²⁰⁵ lo gcig pa'i tshad tsam du byur pa'i thugs ka na drod dang bcas te bzhugs so/
de nas rje tshul dbang nyid nas sku gdung rin po che longs sku'i chas su bcug ste dgung zhag
zhe dgu'i bar du/ g.yung drung klong rgyas/ rgya bod dran gsum/ bla sgrub dod 'byung²⁰⁶ rin
chen/ bde 'dus rtsa gsum sogs kyi gzhung bsrang nas tshogs mchod sogs mchod pa rgya chen
dang 'brel bar²⁰⁷ dbang bzhi len zhing thugs dam bskul pa'i gsol 'debs rigs gzab rgyas gnad
smin zhus/ de skabs snga phyi drung 'khor rnams la nyams rtogs bzang por 'khrungs/ 'ja' 'od
dang me tog gi char sogs nyin re bzhin rtags ya mtshan pa mang du byung bas yul mi rnams
lhag par yang dad pa'i gnas la bkod/ [T1:68a] sems las med pa kha cig gis rtags mtshan
mthong ba la brten nas bla ma tshang bzhugs pa bas sku gshegs pa rang bzang bar gda' zer
ba'ang byung skad/ de nas rje'i gdan sa ba²⁰⁸ sku tsha dam pa blo gros rgya mtsho dang/ lugs
gnyis la mkhyen dpyod rnam par yangs pa'i gcung tshul khrims bstan 'dzin sogs nang 'khor
rnams kyis gshegs rjes kyi dgongs pa bsgrub pa'i phyir du/ khams dbus gtsang gsum gyi gnas
rten bla dgon²⁰⁹ spyi dang/

[C:101] nye 'khor gyi bla dgon che phra so sor mchod pa 'bul/²¹⁰ **zhal** 'debs/²¹¹ mang
'gyed sogs dngos po gtos che ba phul/ rang gnas steng chen dgon mdo sngags g.yung drung

205 T1 appears to be **gyis sha**

206 T1 has 'dod 'byur

207 C has 'brel par

208 T1 has gdan sa pa

209 C has zla dgon

210 T1 has mchod 'bul

211 C has zhabs 'debs

bstan rgyas gling du dgon lag thams cad dang bcas dge 'dun gyi sde lga brgyar longs pa la
 gdung mchod gyi ched du rdil tshad grangs ldan thebs bzahag byas nas bde 'dus rtsa gsum gyi
 cho ga la brten nas ril sgrub zhag bdun gyi sgrub mchod²¹² dang 'brel bar tshogs mchod chen
 mo lo ltar²¹³ gyi rgyun btsugs te rang gzhan gyi rgyud la tshogs gnyis rlabs po che spel ba
 dang/ thugs dgongs 'od gsal **mi slob pa'i**²¹⁴ lam du rdzogs pa'i thabs rgya chen po mdzad/
 phyis nas gdung khang gser zangs las g.yung drung bkod legs kyi mchod rten che legs sgros
 ldan sku mdun nyi ma'i bzhed kyi gzungs rdzongs ltar phyag len du bstar nas sku gdung rin
 po che sphyan²¹⁵ drangs te bzhugs su gsol bas dus phyis kyang skabs rer 'od 'bar ba dang 'ja'
 tshon 'phro bar 'dug ces gleng ngo/ gdung mdun du mar me rgyun 'dzugs dang/ rnam lnga
 nyin ltar²¹⁶ gyis mtshon/ bla ma mnyes pa'i bya ba rjes sgrub kyi rim pa rnams kyang bon
 dang mthun par gegs med mthar rgyas su grub ste dge legs su byas pa'o/ [T1:69a] gnyis pa
 ni/ slar yang nang gsal dbyings las ma g.yos bzhin/

[C:102] zung 'jug ye shes sgyu ma'i skur bzhengs te/ gang 'dul sprul pa'i nyin byed mtha'
 yas pa/ 'khor ba ji srid 'char la gsol ba 'debs/ zhes smos te/ de ltar je btsun la ma nyid re zhig
 gzugs sku'i bkod pa nye bar bsdus nas nang dbyings 'od gsal chen por snyoms par zhugs pa
 las/ slar yang zung 'jug ye shes kyi rtsal²¹⁷ las sgyu ma'i phyag rgya'i sku ru bzhengs te longs
 sku'i zhing khams nyul nas rtsal sbyongs pa dang/ de las gdul bya so so'i ched du gang la
 gang 'dul gyi sprul²¹⁸ pa'i bkod pa mtha' yas pas dag dang ma dag pa'i zhing khams so sor
 bstan pa dang 'gro ba'i don mdzad cing/ [T1:69b] ji srid 'khor ba ma stong gi bar du rtag

212 C has sgrub mtshod

213 T1 has lo bstar

214 C has mi slod pa'i

215 T1 has sbyan

216 T1 has nyin bstar

217 T1 has rtsil

218 T1 has sbrul

khyab lhun gyis grub pa'i phrin las kyi bkod pa mtha' yas pas 'jig rten gyi kham spyi dang
gdul bya snod dang ldan pa gang na su yod pa de dang de'i don rgya chen po mdzad cing
mdad la mdzad par 'gyur bas dus kun tu phan bde'i dpal yon la ci dgar longs spyod pa'i dge
mtshan gyi snang bas cir yang khyab par gyur to/

dbang bcu mnga' ba'i 'dren pa mchog rnames la// 'chi bdag g.yul gnos brdzi ba'i skabs med
kyang// gdul bya'i bsod nams chu snod 'jig gyur pa//

[C:103] de tshe gzugs sku'i zla snang nub tshul ston// 'on kyang rgyal ba kun las ches lhag
pa'i// thugs bskyed smon lam rmad du byung ba'i mthus// dmigs med snying rje'i sgyu 'phrul
skal ba bzhin// 'khor ba ji srid phrin las phyir phyir 'phel//

zhes bya ba ni bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o//

don gnyis pa dgos ched 'grub pa'i ched du 'dod don la smon pa ni/

[T1:70a] de ltar gus pas gsol ba btab pa'i mthus// deng nas bzung ste tshe rabs thams cad
du// g.yel med²¹⁹ thugs rjes rjes su bzung nas kyang// gsang ba gsum gyi byin rlabs 'jug par
shog// theg pa spyi dang khyad par gsang sems gyi// snying po'i bstan dang nam yang mi 'bral
bar// rim gnyis mthar phyin gnas lugs mngon du²²⁰ gyur// rang gzhan don gnyis lhun gyis
grub par shog// rgyal ba'i bstan pa dar zhing rgyas pa dang/ de 'dzin skyes bu'i sku tshe bskal
brgyar brtan//

[C:104] 'jig rten rgud pa²²¹ min yang mi grags bar// rdzogs ldan 'byor pas sa gsum kun
khyab shog//

219 C has g.yel mid

220 C has mngon tu

221 C has gud pa

ches sho lo ka gsum ste/ 'di dag gi don ni rtog pa sla ba'i dbang du byas nas rgyas pa ma
spros so//

slar yang smras pa/ dmu gshen ston pa'i bon gyis mtho ba'i rgyal srid rin chen gser gyi
khrir/ [T1:70b] stobs bcu mnga' rnam mgrin gcig sgo nas snyigs dus bstan 'gro'i mgon
mchog tu/ ngo mtshar shis pa'i dbyangs kyis mnga' gsol zhabs zung nor bu'i udpala la/ skye
dgu yongs kyi gtsug gi rgyan gyur tshad ma'i ston pa shar rdza ba/ gyen bstan nor 'dzin rtsod
ldan mtsho ru bying ba'i tshe/ phyogs bcur spel ba'i thugs bskyed mchog gi snying stobs kyis/
bla na 'deg pa'i phrin las ches cher dar ba la/ dpa' chen rnam kyi bsngags pa'i me tog char
du bsnyil/ rgyal rnam 'gro la rjes su brtse ba'i blos/ g.yung drung slob dpon gzugs su legs
shar bas/ srid dang zhi ba'i yon tan ji snyed pa/ gcig tu bsdus 'dra'i rnam thar mdzod la
dbang/ ngo mtshar mdzad pa'i cha shas phra mo re'i/ 'od dkar lhung ba'i dad spro'i ku mu ta/
ci dgar dgod na zab rgyas rnam par thar/ yongs rdzogs zla ba'i dpal la lta ci smos/ [T1:71a]
rgyal bas yongs bsngags mkhas grub bon gyi rje'i/

[C:105] ngo mtshar rtogs brjod sdom gyi bsdus pa'i don/ nyung gsal snying por bsdebs
nas 'dir 'rjod pa/ rjes 'brangs mkhas rnam mgrin pa'i sgo 'byed brtsam/²²² mtshan tsam gyis
kyang rnam grol mchog **sbyin**²²³ zhing/ thos dang dran pas dge legs 'dod 'jo ba/ bden gsung
tshad mar grub phyir mdo tsam zhig/ brjod pa 'di yang don ldan 'bras bu lci/ de las byung ba'i
rnam dkar dge bas mtshon/ rang gzhan dus gsum legs byas ji snyed kun/ 'gro rnam ma lus
srid mtsho las brgal nas/ rnam pa kun mkhyen go 'phang thob phyir bsngo/ skye ba kun tu rje
btsun bla ma dang/ nam yang 'bral med mnyes pa gsum gyis bsten/ gsung gi mdzod 'dzin
thugs kyi dgongs bcud lon/ [T1:71b] rnam thar phyin las yongs rdzogs 'grub par shog/ gang

222 T1 has rtsam

223 C has spyin

gi gsang gsum byin rlabs rdzogs ldan sprin chen las/ phan dang bde ba'i rin chen char rgyun
 rtag 'bebs pas/ gnas skabs mthar thug 'dod dgu'i legs tshogs kun stsol ba/ khyab bdag rje
 btsun bla ma'i shis pas skyongs gyur cig/ ces khyab bdag rje btsun bla ma dam pa °gang gi
 rnam par thar ba mdor bsdus pa 'di yang rang nyid gyi dad pa'i gsos su gsol 'debs sdom tshig
 tu bkod pa'i skabs phyogs kyi dad 'dus du ma dang khyad par rje'i sku dbon dam pa blo gros
 rgya mtsho nas gsung gi gling bus yang yang bskul zhing nye char yang ston chen po'i gdung
 son rnal 'byor gangs ri ba bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan gyi zhal snga nas dang khyung dbon dam
 pa g.yung drung bdud 'dul nas dran gsos lan mang gnang ba'i ngor °gong gi rjes su skyes pa'i
 'bangs²²⁴ khod spungs kyi **rus**²²⁵ su skyes pa'i gshen gyi btsun pa ngag dbang skal bzang
 bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan zhes pa'i ming du 'bod pas rje bla ma'i yon tan la shes nas thos pa'i
 'dun pa la brten nas rang gnas gnas chen gsang ba yang rdzong gi sgrub sde'i gnas su gus pa
 dang bcas te nye bar sbyar ba'o/

[C:106; T1:72a] dge'o/ bkra shis so//

sarwa mangga lam/²²⁶ na mo gu ra be/ gdod nas kun bzang dgongs pa'i rgyal srid cher/
 rang dbang bsgyur yang snyigs ma'i dmu rgod rnams/ theg pa mchog gi dpal la mngon gzhol
 slad/ ye shes sgyu ma'i skur bzhangs shar rdza pa/²²⁷ gang gis bstan 'gror brtse ba'i phrin las
 gar/ bsgyur ba'i ngo mtshar brjod pa'i²²⁸ mtha' 'das las/ thun mong mos pa'i snang ngor shar
 ba gang/ sgro skur dang bral rtogs pa brjod pa'i tshul/ ~ /phyogs dus rgyal ba'i legs mdzad
 rgya che ba/

224 T1 has 'bang

225 C has ces

226 C omits sarwa mangga lam

227 C has shar rdza ba

228 T1 has brjod ba'i

[C:107] brjod dang mngon mtshungs 'ja' lus grub pa'i gtam/ 'di ni dam pa'i thugs sras mkhas dbang ches/ thos 'dzin bdud rtsir byas so skal bzang rnams/ ~ /des na bstan 'gror thugs bskyed dal 'gro'i rgyun/ bsdu bzhi'i rlabs dkar dus las yol med pa/ rgyal tshab blo gros rgya mtsho'i 'jing zab des/ bon sbyin spar gyi chu gter bskrun²²⁹ 'di rmad/ ~ /de yi dge bas 'gro blo'i sra mkhregs kham/ 'pho chen 'dzam bu'i gser du bsgyur ba'i 'phrul/ sde gsum rdzogs pa chen po'i rnam dpyod 'di/ ji srid bskal par dar zhing rgyas gyur cig/ ces pa'i spar byang cung zad 'di ni °skyes mchog rgyal tshab rin po ches gsung bskul bzhin/ smon sras nam mkha' grags pas ched du brjod pa dge'o//

229 T1 has bkrun

APPENDIX.

Shardza's Practice Instructions

The following is a translation and transliteration of a short xylographic print brought to my attention by the current Menri abbot, Lungtok Tenpé Nyima. It represents a letter of advice written by Shardza to Sherap Namgyal, his disciple in the Amdo Sharkhog region. As it was composed during Shardza's visit to Togden monastery in Amdo Ngawa, it was probably written circa 1922. Offering a highly-distilled image of the practice regimen he advocated, this document promises to provide important clues for better understanding Shardza's legacy. The texts and practices referenced here certainly warrant further research, both from a textual standpoint and from the vantage point provided by contemporary religious ethnography. It would be worthwhile to investigate, for example, the influence of this advice on the three-year retreat program as it has been and continues to be practiced at Rinpung (*rin spungs*) and surrounding Bön monasteries in the Sharkhog region.

Personal Instructions (*zhal khrid*) [for the supreme tulku of Rinpung (*rin spungs*) Monastery, Sherap Namgyal (*shes rab rnam rgyal*)]

I go for refuge to the lama,
 The blending in one nature
 of the deeds demonstrating the excellent path of unsurpassed liberation
 and the indivisible self-awareness of the Teacher, the All-Good One;
 Grant your blessings that we may perfect the supreme path
 in a single lifetime.

That is to say: with respect to taking up the practice [according to] the instruction of the *Dzokpa Chenpo Kusum Rangshar (The Self-Dawning of the Three Bodies According to the Great Perfection)*,²³⁰ first of all, one should attain the fruit of Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. For that purpose, one should take up the practice of this supreme path. Because this thought is extremely important, one should earnestly exert oneself for a long period of time in purifying the mind through the method of correcting one's motivation according to either the preliminary practice of the *Kalung Gyatso (The Ocean of Precepts)*, or the *Tungshuggyi Tri (Instruction on Confession and Atonement)*.²³¹

Then, since a pure/trained mind is the foundation of the path, initially one trains the mind by means of [considering] impermanence. Regarding that, in the beginning of the *Atri Tuntsam Chongapa (The Fifteen Retreat Sessions in the Atri System)*,²³² [it states]: saying 'phat' in natural revulsion and turning inwards to look at who is saying "I, I", strive in an analytical meditation that definitely settles on one's own mind precisely. Then, according to the instruction of confession and atonement, spend time each morning [on topics ranging from] the Four [Thoughts] to Change the Mind, such as reflecting on the difficulty of finding leisure and fortune, up to and including the Six Perfections (Skt. *pāramita*), and meditate [on them] again and again. And from noontime, perform the accumulations and purifications of the nine hundred thousand preliminary practices according to the *Gomrim Tarlam Nyurdrö*

²³⁰ rdzogs pa chen po sku gsum rang shar.

²³¹ sngon 'gro bka' lung rgya mtsho'am ltung bshags kyi khrid. The former text is a widely practiced version of the Bon preliminaries authored by Shardza; the latter is a short text also composed by our author.

²³² a khrid thun mtshams bco lnga pa.

(*The Stages of Meditation, Quickly Traversing the Path to Liberation*),²³³ cease talking, and purify without being separated from the Creation Stage. The grains for the offering *maṇḍala* should be consistent with your wealth, and your prostrations, if you are capable, should be only full-length. Furthermore, since such things as [the making of] a hundred thousand clay images (*saa tsaa*) and [the offering of] a hundred thousand water-tormas are extremely important, you should certainly do them.

Then, according to the *Kusum Rangshar* (*The Natural Dawning of the Three Bodies*), you should certainly receive the esoteric precepts (*gdams ngag*) having settled into calm abiding, searched for awareness, and [received] authentic personal instruction. After that, one should also train in the behavior of Differentiating Samsara and Nirvana (*'khor 'das ru shan dbye ba*), and, with regard to the inner Differentiating Practice (*ru shan*), one should exert oneself without speaking for forty-nine days in the natural behavior of the six classes of beings according to the three systems of Atri, Nyengyü, and Dzokchen. Then one should take up the practice purifying body, speech and mind according to the [*Kunzang*] *Nyingtik* (*The Heart-Essence of the All-Good One*)²³⁴ or the *Kusum Rangshar*. Regarding that, one should [practice] the Natural Settling (*rnal dbab*) for three months and the Sustaining Alertness (*sor zhugs*) for no less than seven days. At this point, if the mind [can] fathom [this much], in accord with the latter part of the *Yingrik Dzö* (*The Treasury of Reality's Expanse and Awareness*),²³⁵ one should obtain the experience of the mind in the nine meditative absorptions (Skt. *samadhi*) with signs. Then, at the end of one hundred days of practicing

²³³ bsgom rim thar lam myur bgrod. An abridged version of the preliminary practices, described as a short bka' lung rgya mtsho.

²³⁴ [kun bzang] snying thig

²³⁵ dbying rigs mdzod

winds, channels and essences in accord with the Fiery Heat (*gtum mo*) [instructions given in the *Kusum Rangshar*], one should definitely complete the Lichö Dun (*li phyod bdun*) ?the Seven Vases (?Orifices) and the Sangtur Chülen (The Secret Downward-[moving Wind] Essence Extraction (*bcud len*)).

Generally speaking, exert yourself in four practice periods and meditative experience and realization [should be] made the center of the practice; regarding this, both master and student need to focus. On these occasions, one deepens the wind and channel training in the Main Practice [section of] the *Kusum Rangshar*. Then, stay in strict retreat [in the dark] for forty-nine days [according to] both the Ösel Dun section of the [*Zhangzhung*] *Nyengyü*²³⁶ and the Ösel Dun (*od gsal bdun*) section of the *Kusum Rangshar*. According to one's faculties, one should take Breakthrough (*khregs chod*) as the center of one's spiritual practice [according to] the Main Practice (*dngos gzhi*) [section] of the [*Kunzang*] *Nyingthik* or the *Kusum Rangshar*. At this time, apply oneself day and night, morning and evening according to the Thablam Druk ("The Sixfold Path of Skillful Means") in the *Kusum Rangshar* or the *Denö Dzö* (*The Treasury of Collected Scriptures*).²³⁷ Spend your life in the practice of Direct Crossing (*thod rgal*), utilizing such things as the two gatherings of light rays applicable at daybreak and sunset, the time of the full moon, and [the light of] butter lamps. Spending your life on these [practices] for either three, seven, nine or twelve years, you should gain confidence in the practice.

²³⁶ zhang zhung snyan rgyud

²³⁷ sde snod mdzod.

A ho!

The Word of the supreme Yungdrung Bon,
 the pith of the teaching;
 The guidance of the Kusum Rangshar,
 the quintessence of the oral instructions;
 The way of taking up the practice,
 Like an eye for a blind man;
 Advice for the path to liberation,
 this helmsman is truly marvelous!

This I have said at the urging of the supreme incarnation of Rinpung monastery, Sherap Namgyal, and it has been composed by the carefree yogin (*bya gral*) of Shardza, Tashi Gyaltzen, in the great monastery for scholarship and practice in the Nga[ba] region [of Amdo], Tashi Mindré Khyil Ling, [alias Togden Gompa].²³⁸

Tibetan Text

[1a] bla med thar pa'i lam bzang ston mdzad pa/ sdon pa kun bzang rang rig dbyer med
 kyi/ ngo bo gcig dril bla mar skyabs su mchi/ tshe gcig lam mchog mthar phyin byin byis
 rlobs/ de la 'dir rdzogs pa chen po sku gsum rang shar gyi khrid nyams su len tshul la/ thog
 mar sems can thams cad kyi don du sangs rgyas kyi 'bras bu thob par bya/ de'i ched du lam
 mchog 'di nyams su blang bar bya'o snyam pa 'di shin tu gal che bas sngon 'gro bka' lung
 rgya mtsho'am ltung bshags kyi khrid lta bu'i kun slong bcos tshul gyis blo sbyong la zhag
 yun tu 'bad la nan tan bya'o/

²³⁸ bshad sgrub bstan pa'i gling chen po bkra shis smin grell 'khyil gling

[1b] de nas rgyud sbyong ba lam gyi rmings gzhi yin pas thog mar mi rtag gis blo sbyong ni a khrid thun mtshams bco lnga pa'i dbu nas/ zhen pa rang log gi pha.t: ces/ nga nga zer ba'i ltar kha nang du log rnas zhib tu rang rgyud la khel nges kyi dpyod sgom la 'bad pa dang/ de nas ltung bshags kyi khrid ltar dal 'byor rnyed dka' bar bsam pa sogs blo ldog rnam bzhi nas phar phyin drug yan chad la nang re bzhin tu lan grangs bskyal nas yang yang bsgom pa dang/ nyin dung nas bsgom rim thar lam myur bgrod ltar sdom 'gro 'bum dgu'i bsags sbyong smra ba bcad la bskyed rim dang mi 'bral bar bsog/

[2a] man.dala 'bul ba'i 'bru nas ni 'byor pa dang bstan/ phyag ni nus na rkyang phyag kho nar 'tshal/ gzhan yang saa tsaa 'bum phrag dang/ chu gtor 'bum phrag sogs zhin tu gal che bas 'gro nges bya/ de nas sku gsum rang shar ltar zhi gnas 'jog la rig pa rtsad gcod go ma log par zhal khrid dang bcas pas gdams ngag thebs nges bya/ de'i rjes 'khor 'das ru shan dbye ba'i spyod pa la'ang sbyang zhing/ nang gi ru shan dbye ba la a rdzogs snyan gsum byi rigs drug rang spyod zhag zhe dgu re la smra bcad bya la 'bad/ de nas lus ngag yid gsum spyong ba snying thig ltar ram sku gsum rang shar ltar nyams su blang la/ rnal dbab la zla ba gsum dang sor zhugs zhag bdun re las mi nyung bar bya/ 'di skabs blos dpog na dbyings rig mdzod smad dum ltar mtshan ma'i ting nge 'dzin dgu la blo'i myong ba thon par bya/

[2b] de nas gtum mo ltar rtsa thig rlung gsum zhag brgyar nyams su blangs pa'i mthar li phyod bdun pa gsang thur bcud len dang bcas pa'i mthar thon ngas su bya la/ spyir yang thun bzhi la 'bad cing nyams myong rtogs pa la nyams len gyi mthil byid pa la ni dpon slob gnyis kas rtsal bton dgos/ 'di skabs rnam su dngos gzhi sku gsum rang shar gyi rtsa rlung sbyong la bogs 'don/ de nas snyan rgyud kyi 'od gsal bdun skor dang/ sku gsum rang shar gyi 'od gsal bdun skor gnyis zhag zhe dgu re mtshams bsdoms la gzbug/ dbang po dang bstun la snying

thig ltar ram sku gsum rang shar gyi dngos gzhi khregs chod la nyams len gyi gzhung shing
bya/

[3a] 'di skabs nyin mtshan nang nub 'chi ka'i thabs lam drug sku gsum rang shar ltar ram
sde snod mdzod ltar 'bad pa 'don/ sngar dgong gi nyams len zer gnyis 'dzom dus dang zla ba
mar me sogs la bsten nas thod rgal gyi nyams len la tshe skyal/ de dag la lo gsum mam lo
bdun nam dgu'am bcu gnyis la sogs mi tshe skyal nas nyams len la gding len par bya'o/ a ho/
bstan pa'i snying bo g.yung drung bon mchog bka'/ gdams pa'i bcud dril sku gsum rang shar
khrid/ nyams su len chul long ba'i mig bu bzhin/ thar pa'i lam khrid ded dbon 'di ko rmad/ ces
ba 'di'ang rin spungs mchog sprul shes rab rnam rgyal gyis bskul ngor shar rdza'i bya bral
bkra shis rgyal mtshan gyi rnga yul gyi bshad sgrub bstan pa'i gling chen po bkra shis smin
grel 'khyil gling dgon du sbyar ba'o/

[3b] bkras shis so/ dge'o/

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